

# Academics Responding to Discourses of Crisis in Higher Education and Research



Zara Pinto-Coelho & Anabela Carvalho  
(editors)

2013

---

© CECS 2013 All rights reserved

This eBook is available on CECS's website:

[www.cecs.uminho.pt](http://www.cecs.uminho.pt)

**Title** *Academics Responding to Discourses of Crisis in Higher Education and Research*

**Editors** Zara Pinto-Coelho & Anabela Carvalho

**ISBN** 978-989-8600-18-9

**Cover** *Image courtesy of [www.unprofound.com](http://www.unprofound.com)*

**Type** eBook, 79 pages

**Date of Publication** 2013, november

**Publisher** CECS - Communication and Society Research Centre  
University of Minho  
Braga, Portugal

**Director** Moisés de Lemos Martins

**Assistant Director** Manuel Pinto

**Graphical Director  
and Digital Edition** Alberto Sá



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Discourses of crisis and academia: debating impacts on practices, values and identities</b> Zara Pinto-Coelho and Anabela Carvalho	<b>4</b>
<b>Interview with Ana Gabriela Macedo</b> by Silvana Mota-Ribeiro	<b>15</b>
<b>Interview with António Magalhães</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Interview with Johannes Angermüller</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Interview with John Richardson</b> by Anabela Carvalho	<b>37</b>
<b>Interview with Juana I. Marín-Arrese</b> by Helena Pires	<b>45</b>
<b>Interview with Michał Krzyżanowski</b> by Ana Brandão	<b>50</b>
<b>Interview with Moisés de Lemos Martins</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Interview with Teun Van Dijk</b> by Zara Pinto-Coelho	<b>73</b>

# Discourses of crisis and academia: Debating impacts on practices, values and identities

ZARA PINTO-COELHO AND ANABELA CARVALHO

*Communication and Society Research Centre,  
University of Minho, Portugal*

The University as an idea, as a project, is being transformed. What are its specificities in the present days? Do universities still have a public task? What are the appropriate functions of higher education? What are the purposes of teaching and research? What counts as relevant knowledge and what counts as an appropriate higher education? Is the age of Universities (late 11<sup>th</sup> c. – early 21<sup>st</sup> c.) in the West getting to a close? Whose discourses are achieving dominance?

Meanings related to the identity, principles and practices of the university have been reworked in profound and contradictory ways, generating tensions and disputes within the university and in its relations with the state and society. It is true that the questioning of the university is probably as old as the idea of the university itself, but we have been living through an amplification of this phenomenon at least since the 1990s, as exemplified by a number of scholarly reflections from that period. In Portugal, Boaventura Sousa Santos wrote then about the triple crisis of the university: a crisis of hegemony, a crisis of legitimacy and an institutional crisis (Santos, 1989). In Canada, Bill Readings published an analysis of the University of Ruins (Readings, 1996) whereas in Brazil, Helgio Trindade edited a book where several scholars discussed the present and the future of the Brazilian university (Trindade, 1999). In Britain, Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie analyzed what they termed “Academic Capitalism” (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) and Jeffrey Williams, in the USA, wrote that we had awakened to a brave new world of the university (Williams, 1999).

It is not only the idea of the university that has been a focus of debate, but also entire higher education systems at the national and international levels (Neave & Amaral, 2012; Antunes, 2006; Ball, 1998; Fejes, 2008; Sader et al, 2008; Trindade, 2003; Zgaga, 2007), the life of diverse institutions of contemporary higher education (Göransson & Brundenius, 2011), the academic profession (Kogan & Teichler, 2007), as well as the actual practices of academic “tribes” and their disciplinary territories (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Strathern, 2000).

As academics in a public university of a European peripheral country, not doing research in the field of education nor reflecting in a systematic way about its fades and dawns, our interests in these matters has been fueled by the practicalities of a daily life as teachers and researchers (increasingly constrained by ever-growing administrative tasks). Academics

have for long been challenged in one way or another by the phenomenon of mass higher education and the multiple problems linked to it. Since the mid-1990s,<sup>1</sup> however, there has been a progressive decrease in the number of candidates for higher education in Portugal and subsequently an increasing competition among universities. Under market-like conditions, universities have adopted survival strategies not always consistent with the pursuit of the public good (Amaral & Magalhães, 2007). Starting with the Bologna Process (1999), which was presented as a *fait accompli* and lived as such in the Portuguese public universities, successive university reforms, together with the more recent rounds of budget cuts in public financing of universities and of research, have had huge effects on the daily lives of academic staff, throwing us in a sea of contradictions, continuous pressures and urgencies. In Trowler's words we have been "sinking", "swinging", "reconstructing" and "coping" (Trowler, 1998) according to the circumstances, but there is no time to stop and think about "what is going on here?"

How are we dealing with these challenges that are at once obstructive, destructive and creating new opportunities? We need to make a pause, to look in the mirror. After all, we are "responding" in whatever we do. Auditors can be shown to be "us" (Brenneis, 1994). As one of our interviewee writes, evoking Yeats, "how can we know the dancer from the dance? Academics and researchers are not only playing the game, but also, at least some of them, nourishing it" (Magalhães, this volume). If there is a trait that distinguishes the university from other institutions it is its capacity to think in long terms (Santos, 2005; 2011), to discuss and imagine other possible worlds, to cultivate discussion (Jaspers, 1960), the conversation of the human kind (Oakeshott, 2004), to interrogate critically (Barnett, 1997) both itself and society. But how does one "think in an institution whose developments tend to make thought more and more difficult, less and less necessary" (Readings, 1996: 175)? How does one think in an institution that is "killing thinking" (Evans, 2004)? How does one think in an environment where "almost everything academics are now asked to do, most of them believe to be wrong" (Russell, 1992: 109)? We are too busy with deadlines, evaluations, accreditations, outputs, neurotic platforms' demands, juggling for excellence, efficiency and students, chasing the euro and fame, surviving in a world of academic Mcjobs (Martins, H., 2004) or simply looking for a job. This seems to be the adequate terrain for self-destruction in a globalized higher education context driven by market forces inasmuch as we seem unable to formulate reality in different terms and "make sense together" by "joining the dots".

Some analysts argue that scholars are "captured by the discourse" (Bowe et al, 1994) of the "University of Excellence-as-business", "of maximum Throughput" (Martins, H., 2004), with far reaching consequences as there is little room to challenge this new common sense effectively and in a way that resonates with society's concerns. But as Castells reminds us, universities are subject to "the conflicts and contradictions of society and therefore they will tend to express – and even to amplify – the ideological struggles present in all societies" (Castells, 2001: 212). Discourse is a major resource of these struggles. Its nature is never fixed once and for all but always in flux, invisible and taken-for-granted in some situations, strategically used and/or openly challenged in others. Higher education and its institutions

<sup>1</sup> Some authors have identified discrete phases from the 1990s onwards (see Amaral & Magalhães, 2009).

are struck by the cross-currents of the state, the market and civil society. Demand overload is a daily experience of institutions in a context of increasing scarcity of resources (financial, human and others). Simultaneously, they must remain faithful to the “public good” ideals of higher education. In addition, universities are dialogical entities in the sense that they are composed of multiple discourses and a plurality of community of practices (Trowler, 2001: 18). The fact that certain expectations and demands are voiced more loudly and more often than others reminds us that universities need to address the current situation in principled, creative and strategic ways. They need to recognize the legitimacy of certain claims and to refute others that could reduce them to something other than a university. Subjected to the dictatorship of any only way of thinking, the university becomes useless (Nóvoa, 2012: 635). Semiotic democracy requires “engagement, struggle and considerable ‘work’” (Trowler 2001: 32). It does not just happen by itself or by magic.

One way to go down this path is through a conversation with our fellow scholars in order to know their opinions on key issues of the current debate on higher education and research. It is by now common sense that there is a global tendency towards a market-oriented reform of universities and education systems, pressured by a number of structural changes frequently described in terms such as neo-liberal globalization, the information age, the rise of the knowledge-based economy and the learning society. Universities in many regions of Europe can currently be described as being in a state of crisis, suffering an acute lack of funding and going through money-saving reorganizations, struggling with the new “rituals of verification” (Power, 1999) and with providing knowledge and education that meet the changing needs of their surrounding society and economy. While there is a general trend (Amaral, 2010), experiences in different countries, institutions, disciplinary domains and academic milieus by different individuals will of course vary. Using an opportunity generated by the organization of the *Fourth International Conference of Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines* at the University of Minho, Braga, in July 2012, we engaged in a process of interviewing some of our fellow academics. We wanted to gather their opinions on the use of crisis discourses in higher education and research, particularly on its institutional recontextualisation (at the European Union and national levels, as well as at universities and research centres) in the social sciences and humanities fields, and the implications of these processes for the role of the state, the power and role of academics, the character of research, and for the relations between central and peripheral European universities.

We first interviewed four keynote speakers invited for this conference. This group included academics in senior positions and younger scholars, working in different institutions of higher education in Europe (Spain and United Kingdom), with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, interests and institutional positions, but all doing research in the field of Discourse Studies. In a second moment, we added another group of four interviewees, in order to cover more disciplines, to include academics from our own country and academics that due to their research interests and/or to their professional positions are involved in institutional policy-making, its implementation and/or its analysis.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Five interviews took a semi-structured form, lasted between an hour and an hour and a half, were tape recorded and fully transcribed. In the other three, interviewees António Magalhães, Johannes Angermüller and Moisés de Lemos Martins responded in writing to a set of questions (this option was due to a lack of resources to conduct interviews afar).



This quest was restricted to the social sciences and humanities domains, a *parti-pris* explained by our belief that these disciplinary fields tend to be considered dysfunctional (Lima, 2010; Martins, M. L., 2004) within the currently dominant market-oriented prescriptions of “relevance”, “efficiency”, “accountability” and “quality” (Power, 2000; Shore & Wright, 1999). This has had a profound impact on these fields’ institutional financing, position, and organization, as well as on teaching and research practices, but more fundamentally it has affected their own identity and role, expressed by a general concern with the future of the social sciences and humanities’ academic practices, and the future of the type of enquiry that they promote (Soeiro & Tavares, 2012; CCCSH, 2012; Nóvoa, 2012).

At the time of writing, crucial policy developments offered contradictory signs for the future of the social sciences and humanities in Europe. The new European Union Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020, is said to respond to a “key challenge”: to “stabilise the financial and economic system while taking measures to create economic opportunities” (European Commission, 2013a). The EU research policy is now openly at the service of the corporate world:

“Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe’s global competitiveness. (...) Horizon 2020 will tackle societal challenges by helping to bridge the gap between research and the market by, for example, helping innovative enterprise to develop their technological breakthroughs into viable products with real commercial potential. This market-driven approach will include creating partnerships with the private sector and Member States to bring together the resources needed.” (European Commission, 2013b)

Solving the financial crisis thus becomes the official mission and *leitmotiv* of new knowledge quests.

In this context, we can only anticipate further constraints for research that does not offer (economic) “growth” prospects. However, the recently agreed Vilnius Declaration – Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities, whose Steering Committee was headed by Helga Nowotny, the current president of the European Research Council, posits that those areas are “indispensable in generating knowledge about the dynamic changes in human values, identities and citizenship that transform our societies”. Writing in *The Guardian*, Nowotny (2013) offers a different interpretation of Horizon 2020 saying that it “reflects a strikingly different approach to developments across the Atlantic. In the United States, the social sciences and humanities are under attack. In Europe, we are committed to integrating the natural sciences, engineering, and social sciences and humanities, aiming to foster better, more valuable research.” The shape and consequences of this “integration” are yet to be seen. The extent to which the social sciences and humanities can continue to serve the “project of democratization” (Giroux, 2009: 669) and “what we might call the humanistic aspects of science and social science – the imaginative, creative aspect, and the aspect of rigorous critical thought” (Nussbaum, 2010: 2) is, for now, unknown.

In any discussion about the future of the university, the risk of being caught in a straight-jacketed thinking is real, with calls for reality on one side, and for the mythical golden age on the other. On way to escape this is to engage in a dialectical exercise between

accepting imposing solutions and taking a principled stand: “ideals that have no realistic prospect of coming about are worthless; survival, even prosperity that is not in any way determined by critically chosen goals cannot count as success” (Graham, 2005: 5). In other words, we recognize the importance of striking a balance between extremes and we think that there are good opportunities for learning from each other’s experiences.

Our interviewees do not necessarily agree on their analysis of the uses of crisis discourses in higher education and research, but we found nevertheless a fair amount of consensus. Below, we summarize the most important topics covered in their answers, with an emphasis on the commonalities in the interviews.

All the academics linked the current crisis discourse in higher education and research with the global economic and financial crisis, with major restrictions in higher education budgets, and with the reinforcement of the profit-oriented university. Some connected these changes to a wider political agenda and to long-term societal trends associated with the erosion of the welfare state, the shift to an “evaluative state” (Neave, 1988), and the dominance of neo-liberal ideals across the globe.

They express their concern with the impact of these changes on the enduring identity crisis of higher education, on the ways of running universities and research centres, on the nature of the education provided and the knowledge produced, on the geopolitics of knowledge, on the geopolitical relations between universities, as well as the effects of these changes on students and on access to higher education.

Some of our interviewees claim that the present crisis has reinforced the hegemony of the economic discourse and its related counterpart, the discourse of managerialism. According to them, the shift towards the market pole came with the reinforcement of institutional autonomy. Less centralized power has resulted in the increment of accountability exercises – reduced to quantification and measurement or “coercive commensurability” (Shore and Wright, 2000) – and in the demand for relevance – reduced to “value for money”. This seems particularly evident in the case of countries like the UK, which have experimented profound neo-liberal reforms. These regulatory mechanisms, says one of our interviewees, act through steering at a distance, that is, controlling what academic staff think and do in a disguised manner (Angermüller, this volume), and, more importantly, turning them “into self-managing individuals who render themselves auditable” (Shore and Wright, 2000: 57).

The interviewees relate the introduction of entrepreneurialism into the academic scene – due not only to external forces, but also to internal academic dynamics – with positive and negative developments. The fact that evaluation criteria to recruit academic staff is getting more demanding is seen as a positive step inasmuch as it introduces open forms of competition for jobs, counteracting endogenous tendencies. Regarding research, the withdrawal of the state from higher education, in the shape of funding cuts, is seen by some as a potentially positive change considering that in the past it was sometimes associated “with giving particular guidelines to research, fostering or promoting certain areas of research” (Krzyżanowski, this volume) and that it may contribute to fostering scholars’ interest in the social relevance of research. The pressure towards internationalization is pointed out as positive, as long as it stands for solidary cooperation, which is seen as fundamental to



research advancements. Another positive effect is that this demand may prevent or reduce the risks implied in a strictly national and “often parochial way of doing research” (idem).

Some academics recognize the hegemony of the English language in scientific production, but they also stress its “functional aspects”: it enables “networking, collaborations and interdisciplinarity” (idem) as long as it works as a more international language “that is no longer controlled by the natives” (Marín-Arrese, this volume).

Nevertheless, the emphasis in the interviews is on the risks and negative effects of the profound institutional transformation in the university and its environments upon individual and collective identities, teaching, research, working conditions and conditions of thought, and also upon students. The consecutive rounds of financial cuts to higher education institutions means, for some of the interviewees, less research and thus raising unemployment among young lecturers and among prospective researchers that do not get scholarships, including those that have completed a PhD: for example, “thousands of them in Spain are now leaving the country” (van Dijk, this volume); “what our politicians do today is advise young people to leave the country (Portugal), to emigrate” (Martins, this volume). Those cuts have been leading to rising fees because universities now depend more on students’ payment to survive. This tendency is seen as dangerous for several reasons: it may lead to a decrease in students’ applications; it is placing them in an escalating debt situation; it is furthering inequalities of access and participation in higher education; and it does not mean that the quality of education is raised. As one of our interviewees says, “you can’t raise the quality of education by turning students into fee-paying customers. On the contrary, to get the best possible students and results, you need to pay them. This is especially clear with PhD students (...). Yet if you make them pay, you attract those for whom academic diplomas need to have pay off sometime. In the long run, this kills higher education since it needs people who do teaching and research for its own sake” (Angermüller, this volume). According to the interviewees, cuts in state-funding may also lead to: the creation or the strengthening of status hierarchies between universities; the closure of universities that recruit from working classes students; a concentration of academic prestige and power in a few elite institutions and countries, marginalizing more peripheral countries and pushing their specific education programmes and research projects to the fringes of the European higher education and research area. The case of Portugal is exemplary in this regard. As Martins (this volume) argues, for over twelve years, the Portuguese state has been imposing on researchers international “help” with research through the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation (FCT) (“international” means predominantly from an Anglo-Saxon geo-cultural area). “This international “help” in research (with language, with the questions to deal with, with the assessment teams, and with the theoretical models it follows), required by the Portuguese government (via FCT) is all too similar to that of a country dependent upon “external financial assistance”. Also in science the situation is that of financial “rescue”, with the European Commission, as the funding institution, establishing the way of doing science, and the Portuguese government, in a submissive attitude, following external interests instead of the interests of the Portuguese community”.

Some of the academics question the efficacy of auditing procedures for achieving the aim of high quality mass higher education. They highlight the trend towards a growing

evaluative bureaucracy with high transaction costs and unclear benefits. According to Martins (this volume) this growing bureaucracy means that “the university has decided to deny itself. It denies itself by organising regular consultations with students to register their opinions about their professors and the courses’ syllabi. It denies itself, when all it wants to do is communicate, listen, when it wants pedagogy and supervision, and neglects its obligation to teach.” Other academics claim that in the evaluation and assessment of applications for research funding the concern with quality is not carried into the analysis of content and rigor of academic work. Rather, the concern is with external mechanisms by which such work is valued, that is, the reputation of researchers as seen, for instance, through the journals in which they publish. For some of the interviewees this situation acts to the advantage of the Anglo-Saxon academy and implies the reduction of intellectual diversity. They pointed out that this criterion, which is seen as imported from the “hard” sciences, is specially pungent for the humanities, an area where publishing a monograph is seen as harder work and traditionally more prestigious. Based on an ongoing research project, one of the academics that we interviewed underlines that the “importance of ISI and Google Scholar indicators is overestimated” and the absence of “any evidence that these indicators have become any more relevant in decision-making situations such as third-party funding decisions or job recruitments” (Angermüller, this volume).

The emphasis on research relevance and impact is in itself evaluated as a good thing by some academics. They claim, though, that the quality of research is endangered if it becomes a profit-steered business or if it has to produce “value for money”. According to one of the academics “research needs open exchange and free circulation of ideas. Research needs an academic commons. You can’t produce scientific ideas without exposing them to the critical attention of the whole community. Yet if research is subjected to the logic of a private business, it will cease to be scientific” (Angermüller, this volume). Furthermore, this logic of relevance is producing a “sense of instrumentalism” in research and a “sense of timidity” “where you go only for certain kind of projects.” (Richardson, this volume). One can even say that “today, the scientific community has no illusions in this respect: those who vindicate research freedom concerning the subject, the question, the language or the theoretical and methodological paradigms of the research will not be funded” (Martins, this volume). In some cases, people feel constrained to develop “ideas that seem to appeal not just to people working in humanities, but somehow have that crossover with the so-called hard sciences because it seems that at the moment they are the only ones that are being funded” (Macedo, this volume). Adding to this, the relevance requirement can be prohibitive for types of research “that only speak to academic interests” or “more exploratory research, and fields which “cannot be immediately sold as relevant – for example in humanities and social sciences – that are being viewed as obsolete or basically unnecessary” (Krzyżanowski, this volume). In this context, asks one of the academics, how can “irrelevant research in philosophy or ontology, for instance, expect to be funded”, how “can researchers from these research fields compete for funding with “evidence-based” projects?” (Magalhães, this volume).

The current research funding regimes, with their stress on useful knowledge, its economic and commercial utility, and the increasing dependence of knowledge producers

on external financial sponsorship, are thus seen as making competition harder for the “soft” sciences. Within these sciences there are “many research areas of primary importance to society and individuals” (Krzyżanowski, this volume). As one academic notes, “it is not that simple as it seems to some people who say “this is useful, that is not useful”” (idem). These positions lead us to an argument used by Välimaa (2009: 15): “universities are really useful and active members of knowledge societies if they develop theoretical understandings on the changing world because there are no other societal institutions which have the luxury of reflecting on the world from nonutilitarian perspectives. In this regard, critical thinking and theorizing is the most useful activity in globalised knowledge societies”. In the words of one of the interviewees, “there is a problem of finding the right balance” (Krzyżanowski, this volume) and one should be aware that initiatives that are intended to enhance the hugely disregarded yet foundational research in humanities and social sciences, as is the case of those promoted by national councils, for example, may end up self-reproducing a sort of a “national research culture” (idem).

The last topic of the discussion is related with resistance to the discourse of crisis and with alternative futures for forms of governance of education and research. Regarding the first question, resistance, several academics emphasized its non-existence, or its insignificance inside universities: “there’s a lot of talk, and discomfort (...) in staff rooms but it’s not translating to action” (Richardson, this volume); “people are very concerned with their own problems” – cuts in salaries, cuts in jobs (Marín-Arrese, this volume); “very few articles have been written about it from a discourse analytical point of view” (van Dijk, this volume). The current political and economic climate may actually be leading scholars to paralysis: “we go in (...) circles, saying that we do not do [something] because of the crisis (...) it’s like a constant censorship that’s limiting us, limiting our constructing whatever needs to be done in educational terms, research, [etc.]” (Macedo, this volume). One of our interviewees suggests that we should look at culture to find models of resistance: “music, theatre, literature (...) are very important strongholds for the creation of discourses of resistance against the crisis”. Artists can be inspiring as they engage in a work that is “disquieting” and that poses challenges to the current common sense (idem).

As for future alternative ways of governance, some academics note that one should not idealize past forms of regulation and organization of research and higher education as “the “ivory tower” never existed” and “collegial governance (...) was far from being democratic” (Magalhães, this volume). They appeal for a better balance between academic self-governance and accountability, for high levels of self- reflexivity, honesty and flexibility among scholars vis-à-vis teaching, students and society, and for the advancement of “discourses and practices that promote what is “higher” in higher education” (idem). For Martins (this volume) it is vital to combat melancholy – that aesthetic mermaid whose desires are fulfilled with operative mobilisation, with no thought nor social or political engagement – with the ethic criterion of critical unrest (...) Universities should be seen as places of unbounded freedom, as places of a democracy to come. Above all, universities embody a principle of critical resistance and a potential for dissidence, guided by what Jacques Derrida called “a thinking of justice (...). It is their ultimate job to safeguard the

possibilities of the adventure of thought, and to transform both teaching and research into an idea without which the present is a pure form from which all potential has disappeared”.

We finish this introduction with Ruth Levitas (2011) underlying that alternative discourses of possible futures demand a holistic thinking, an imaginary reconstitution of societies within which the future of education is embedded and within which we imagine ourselves otherwise. This kind of thinking allows us to judge what we are doing in light of what we should be doing and in light of who we might become. We have shown, hopefully, that there is no consensus among academics on many such matters. The university will cease to exist if it is not able to accept and to cultivate these differences. However, this should not preclude us from engaging in inclusive debates about our practices, values and identities, and from initiating meaningful struggles for what we imagine to be best.

## REFERENCES

- Amaral, A. (2010) “Tendências Recentes dos Sistemas de Avaliação do Ensino Superior na Europa”, *Sísifo/Revista de Ciências da Educação*, 12: 51-62.
- Amaral, A. & Magalhães, A. (2007) “Market Competition, Public Good and Institutional Governance: Analyses of Portugal’s Experience”, *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 19/ 1: 63-76.
- Amaral, A. & Magalhães, A. (2009) “Between Institutional Competition and the Search for Equality of Opportunities: Access of Mature Students”, *Higher Education Policy*, 22 (4): 505-521.
- Antunes, F. (2006) “Governança e Espaço Europeu de Educação: Regulação da Educação e visões para o Projecto ‘Europa’”, *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 75: 63-93.
- Ball, S. (1998) “Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspectives in Education Policy”, *Comparative Education*, 34 (2): 119-130.
- Barnett, R. (1997) *Higher Education: A Critical Business*, Buckingham: SRHE/Open University Press.
- Becher, T. & Trowler, P. R. (2001) *Academic Tribes and Territories. Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*, Buckingham: SRHE & Open University Press.
- Bowe, R., Gewirtz, S. & Ball, S. J. (1994) “Captured by the Discourse? Issues and Concerns in Researching ‘Parental Choice’”, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 15, 1: 63-78.
- Brenneis, D. (1994) “Discourse and Discipline at the National Research Council: A Bureaucratic Bildungsroman”, *Cultural Anthropology*, 1: 23–36.
- Castells, M. (2001) “Universities as Dynamic Systems of Contradictory Functions”, in Müller, J., Cloete, N. & Badat, S. (eds.) *Challenges of Globalisation: South African Debates with Manuel Castells*, Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- CCCSH (2011) *Ciências Sociais e Humanidades: Mais Excelência, Maior Impacte. Relatório Final*. Retrieved January 25, 2012 from [http://www.fct.pt/conselhos\\_cientificos/docs/re\\_l\\_final\\_cccsh\\_2011.pdf](http://www.fct.pt/conselhos_cientificos/docs/re_l_final_cccsh_2011.pdf).
- European Commission (2013a) “Horizon 2020: The New EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, 2014-2020” [Presentation]. Retrieved October 5, 2013 from <http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/press/horizon2020-presentation.pdf>

- European Commission (2013b) "The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, 2014-2020". Retrieved October 5, 2013 from [http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index\\_en.cfm?pg=h2020](http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020)
- Evans, M. (2004) *Killing Thinking: The Death of the Universities*, London: Continuum.
- Fejes, A. (2008) "European Citizens Under Construction – The Bologna Process Analysed from a Governmentality Perspective", *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 40 (4): 515-530.
- Giroux, H. A. (2009) "Democracy's Nemesis: The Rise of the Corporate University", *Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies*, 9 (5): 669-695.
- Göransson, B. & Brundenius, C. (eds.) (2011) *Universities in Transition. The Changing Role and Challenges for Academic Institutions*, New York: Springer Verlag.
- Graham, G. (2005) *The Institution of Intellectual Values: Realism and Idealism in Higher Education*, Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic.
- Kogan, M. & Teichler, U. (2007) *Key Challenges to the Academic Profession*, Kassel INCHER-Kassel: International Centre for Higher Education Research.
- Levitas, R. (2011) "The Necessity of Utopian Thinking". Retrieved May 25, 2013 from <http://sociologicalimagination.org/archives/8077>.
- Lima, L. (2010) "Investigação e Investigadores em Educação: Anotações Críticas", *Sísifo/Revista de Ciências da Educação*, 12 (10): 65/72.
- Jaspers, K. (1960) *The Idea of the University*, London: Peter Owen.
- Martins, H. (2004) "The Marketisation of Universities and Some Cultural Contradictions of Academic Capitalism", *Metacrítica*. Retrieved May 25, 2013 from <http://www.adelinotorres.com/sociologia.htm>.
- Martins, M. L. (2004) *As Ciências Sociais e a Política Científica*. Retrieved May 25, 2013 from <http://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/handle/1822/1059>.
- Neave, G. & Amaral, A (eds) (2012) *Higher Education in Portugal. A Nation, a Generation 1974 – 2009*, Dordrecht/Heidelberg: Springer Verlag.
- Neave, G. (1998) "The Evaluative State Reconsidered", *European Journal of Education*, 33 (3): 265-284.
- Nóvoa, A. (2012) "Entrevista com o Professor António Nóvoa", *Educação & Sociedade*, 33 (119): 633-645. Retrieved April 14, 2013 from <http://www.cedes.unicamp.br>
- Nowotny, H. (2013) "Shifting Horizons for Europe's Social Sciences and Humanities", *The Guardian*. Retrieved September 24, 2013 from <http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2013/sep/23/europe-social-sciences-humanities>
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2010) *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs The Humanities*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Oakeshott, M. (2004) *What is History and Other Essays*, Exeter: Imprint Academic.
- Power, M. (1999) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Power, M. (2000) "The Audit Society - Second Thoughts", *International Journal of Auditing*, 4: 111-119.

- Readings, B. (1996) *The University in Ruins*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Russell, C. (1992) *Academic Freedom*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Sader, E., Aboites, H. & Gentili, P. (2008) *La Reforma Universitaria. Desafíos y Perspectivas Noventa Años Después*, Buenos Aires: CLACSO.
- Santos, B. de S. (1989) "Da Ideia da Universidade à Universidade de Ideias", *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 27/28: 11-61.
- Santos, B. de S. (2005) "A Universidade no Séc. XXI: Para uma Reforma Democrática e Emancipatória da Universidade", *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, 23: 137-202.
- Santos, B. de S. (2011) "A Encruzilhada da Universidade Europeia", *Revista do SNESup*, 41.
- Shore, C. & Wright, S. (1999) "Audit Culture and Anthropology: Neo-Liberalism in British Higher Education", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 5 (4): 557-75.
- Shore, C. & Wright, S. (2000) "Coercive Accountability: The Rise of Audit Culture in Higher Education" in Strathern, M. (ed.) *Audit Cultures. Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*, London: Routledge, pp. 57-89.
- Slaughter, S. & Leslie, L. (1997) *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University*, Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Soeiro, R. & Tavares, S. (2012) *Rethinking the Humanities: Paths and Challenges*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Strathern, M. (ed.) (2000) *Audit Cultures. Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*, London: Routledge.
- Trindade, H. (org.) (1999) *Universidade em Ruínas na República dos Professores*, Petrópolis/Porto Alegre: Vozes/Cipede.
- Trindade, H. (2003) *O Discurso da Crise e a Reforma Universitária Necessária da Universidade Brasileira*, Buenos Aires: CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales. Retrieved June 10, 2013 from <http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/clacso/gt/20101109021739/9trindade.pdf>
- Trowler, P. R. (1998) *Academics Responding to Change. New Higher Education Frameworks and Academic Cultures*, Philadelphia: SRHE, Open University.
- Trowler, P. R. (2001) "Captured By The Discourse? The Socially Constitutive Power of New Higher Education Discourse in the UK", *Organization*, 8 (2): 183-201. Retrieved July, 21, 2013 from [http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/13852/1/Trowler\\_Captured\\_by\\_the\\_Discourse.doc](http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/13852/1/Trowler_Captured_by_the_Discourse.doc)
- Välimaa, J. (2009) "The Relevance of Higher Education to Knowledge Society and Knowledge-Driven Economy: Education, Research and Innovation" in Kehm, B., Huisman, J. & Stensaker, B. (eds.) *The European Higher Education Area: Perspectives on a Moving Target*, Rotterdam/Boston/Taipei: Sense Publishers, pp. 23-41.
- Williams, J. (1999) "Brave New University", *College English*, 61 (6): 742-751.
- Zgaga, P. (2007) *Higher Education in Transition. Reconsiderations on Higher Education in Europe at the Turn of Millennium*, Umeå: Umeå University.



## Interview with Ana Gabriela Macedo



BY SILVANA MOTA-RIBEIRO

Ana Gabriela Macedo is a Full Professor at the Institute of Arts and Humanities of the Universidade of Minho, English Department, Director of the Humanities Research Centre (CEHUM) and President of the Cultural Council of the Universidade do Minho. Her main research interests are Comparative Literature, English Literature (Modernism and Postmodernism), Feminist Studies and Visual Poetics. She has coordinated several research projects on these topics, and has an extensive list of articles and edited books: *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* (ed. with A. L. Amaral) (Afrontamento, 2005); *Paula Rego e o Poder da Visão. 'A minha pintura é como uma história interior'* (Cotovia, 2010); *Identity and Cultural Translation* (ed. with M. Pereira) (Peter Lang: 2005); *Género, Cultura Visual e Performance* (ed. with F. Rayner) (Húmus: 2011). For more information, please go to:  
[http://ceh.ilch.uminho.pt/pagina\\_investigador.php?inv=ana\\_gabriela\\_macedo\\_lit.php](http://ceh.ilch.uminho.pt/pagina_investigador.php?inv=ana_gabriela_macedo_lit.php)

Silvana Mota-Ribeiro is Assistant Professor at the Communication Sciences Department and a member of the *Communication and Society Research Centre* (CECS), University of Minho, Portugal.

**Silvana Mota-Ribeiro – *How has the notion of crisis entered discourses about higher education and research?***

**Ana Gabriela Macedo** – I think the notion of crisis is transversal at the moment to any kind of discourse. Therefore it goes without saying that it would have to enter discourses in higher education and research. But, on the other hand, I think that crisis is a concept that partakes of any kind of thorough thinking about education and any thorough thinking about research. It's something that we know, we understand, we feel, that the concept has slightly changed to mean something more timely, more political, more ideological in relation to the economic crisis that we are going through. So, for me and for many people, I'm sure, the

concept of crisis is definitely not new. It has not meant something negative as such. But, at the moment, of course we identify it with very, very, concrete issues which have a very economic, or “economicist”, if you like, connotation.

***How do you think the notion of crisis has been used to construct problems or offer putative solutions in the discourses of, for instance, politicians, research, institutions, universities and even the European Union, regarding specifically Social Sciences and Humanities.***

When you say it has been used, what you mean? How it has been appropriated, is that what you mean?

***Yes. How it has been enacted...***

I don't think this is very clear because if you separate the concept of crisis from the particular moment we are living through, then, this would have one answer. If, on the other hand, this question is already set in the context of the economic crisis we are going through, then, another answer should come to our minds. Is this what you mean? In the present moment...?

***Yes, yes, and, specifically, in Social Sciences and Humanities.***

Ok. Then, concretely, what we hear all the time it's like reasons to justify cuts, for example. Reasons to justify the need for restrictions of one kind or another. And, then, the crisis as such is at the background of it all and is so to speak a big umbrella that seems to justify what is not going right. And that's dangerous because you kind of learn the jargon and you start saying: “Well, you know, there's no point in doing this project at the moment because of the crisis. No point in hiring new people, getting new blood for universities or research institutions because there's no money, so there's a crisis”. And this is like a *cul-de-sac*, we go in turns, in kind of circles, saying that we do not do this because of the crisis. So somehow the crisis justifies our not doing things, our not accomplishing our projects. And it's like a constant censorship that's limiting us, limiting our activity, limiting our constructing whatever needs to be done in educational terms, research, projects, etc. etc. So it's very dangerous. So, somehow, I'm very much against it. There's no way we can avoid the fact that Europe is going through very heavy economic, political, financial crisis. That's very true. But we've got to find ways to ... not to avoid it but to resist, to resist this feeling that nothing can be done because of the crisis because this kind of leaves us numb, without any possibility of movement and that's very worrying.

***And you think that's a heavier burden for Social Sciences and Humanities?***

Yes. When you think about crisis and when you think about what has to be cut or where to start with the cuts history has told us that Humanities and Social Sciences tend to be the first to become redundant somehow. It doesn't have to be so; it doesn't have to be like this. But it's like, “ok, sciences must go on, because it's basic research, biomedicine or medicine, for example, or engineering sciences, that's the pragmatic world, and it has to go, it has to go on”. So, where do we cut? We cut somewhere in culture because it's supposed to be dispensable, or less pragmatic, or less cause-effect, it provides less effects in terms of

providing social changes or providing money and all that. And again it's a very worrying feeling for those of us that work in this field and of course do not believe the least that culture is redundant or less important.

***In your opinion, how does this crisis discourse in education and research intertwine with other crisis discourses, for instance, in culture, in finance, in politics?***

Again, as I was saying, look at the situation in Portugal. I lived in England throughout the eighties and there were a lot of cuts in education because Margaret Thatcher was prime minister and the first to suffer the heavy cuts were the Departments of Humanities. Many of them disappeared, there were big merges in the Humanities and Social Sciences Departments. And that's very much what's happening now. All over Europe, in fact. I was in France last year giving a talk in a conference and people complained about it there, people are complaining about it in Spain, people are complaining about it in Italy, and we are complaining about it in Portugal. So I don't think this is a local issue, this is definitely an international problem. Culture should have a major role to play. And somehow I think culture is playing a very strong role at the moment in kind of creating instances of resistance. If we go to Teatro São João in Porto, at the moment, what do we see? We see that there's much less money than before, it's very difficult to put out plays, there's not a resident company, for example. There's no money to hire new actors. Productions are difficult to create without money. But, whatever it's been produced still has a very high quality. I'm talking about Porto because we live in the North and it makes sense to talk about the north of Portugal... So I feel and I strongly believe that it's maybe more so in times of crisis and difficulties like the ones we are living through that culture has even more responsibilities to be a kind of stronghold of that discourse of resistance. And we are seeing that. Another example: music. Every day, every morning, we put on the radio in Portugal, at the moment, there's a new group of Portuguese young people that despite all the odds and all the difficulties got together, managed to make their own band and sing. They sing in Portuguese and they sing protest songs. So it's like back to when I was 17, 18, 19, the years of 74 Revolution, and it's back to times when the ballad, or whatever we want to call it, is badly needed, is strongly needed.

So that feeling that nobody is doing anything, everybody is depressed, you know, people are nostalgic about the past... I definitely do not think this is what is happening in a country like Portugal and probably in many other places. We see young people resisting in the ways that they manage, in the ways that they find possible to create discourses of resistance. So they are cultural discourses and they are political discourses, in that case. I strongly believe that music, theatre, literature, whatever... the media, they can be too — but you know I'm not so familiar with that... — are very important strongholds for the creation of discourses of resistance against the crisis, against the nostalgia feeling, which is very dangerous.

***The idea that people are doing nothing... But when you think of the role of the state in research and education, it's not easy to imagine it without funding, so it's not that easy to resist. So, how do you think the role of the state in research and education is being changed and revised and with what implications? Because, if in culture we have a certain degree of freedom***

***and creative potential of artists and cultural entities and agents and actors, when it comes to research it's quite hard to imagine it without funding. So how do you think that this freedom and this creative potential of researchers are being affected in a context where markets seem to rule?***

I think that, politically, Europe is going through times of neo-liberalism without any disguise, without any veils. That's what we are seeing all around us, and Portugal is no exception to this. And the political discourse, the cultural discourse, and the financial discourse of neo-liberalism are coherent. Any ideology after all wants to or tends to be coherent. So they want to make us believe that whatever is state-funded should be over because it's like we should feel guilty for being financed or funded by the state. And that's very dangerous, as I said. The nostalgia trip, you know, "oh, let's go back to the old days when people really worked hard and they didn't need the state to give them any support and the self-made man, and this and that". You know, it's the neo-liberal discourse. I personally believe that Portugal really developed a lot, seriously and coherently in the last 40 years or so, which we are almost about to commemorate next year – 40 years after the Carnations' Revolution.

If we can say at the moment that we have 25% of people with diplomas, having gone through university and having a university degree, that's really important and it's wonderful. 40 years ago the figures would be so dramatically different that people should not forget that. Definitely the country has changed and changed in all different sectors, education being, as we all, I think, agree, the most important of them all because it's from this possibility of people acquiring a different level of literacy and being more capable citizens and more in control of their lives that the country has been able to change and to be more competitive also.

So when young people are told "ok, you don't have a job here why don't you go look for a job elsewhere?" it's very serious. It's very important that young Portuguese people can compete with other young people from all over the place, America or England... But this is thanks to a very strong effort to give them the education that they weren't able to get 40 years ago.

***In the Social Sciences and Humanities we have a context-specific research. There's the question of Europe, but also which countries in Europe drive research policies, and the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation cites Germany as a model and claims that the way it can help the Portuguese scientific community being more successful in European calls is by promoting, and I quote, "a greater alignment with European programmes". To what extent do you think that core countries are setting standards and research areas and priorities? And how do you think that might impact on Social Sciences and Humanities, which are obviously context specific? We have another country telling us what to do...***

I think that, again, what's happened in the last 15 to 20 years in the fields that both you and myself share, Humanities and Social Sciences, is definitively a dramatic change for the better. I remember that, let's say, 20 years ago, 15 years ago, there was no possibility of talking about projects being financed. It was unheard of. I remember having discussions here in this university when somebody with responsibilities from our Science Foundation came to this university and I asked: "When are you going to be able to apply for a project and get successful? Please, open a possibility... Name us, so that when we see the rules of a

new programme, we see, ok, Humanities are specified there so there's a possibility for us to apply for this scholarship or for this project funding...". So we were not even able to apply because we did not count, we were not there. Things have changed dramatically and now we are there or we were for a number of years. As you know I've been running a research Centre of Humanities for, I think, 12 years now and what I've seen happening is this major change of projects within this particular research centre, which is called Centre for Humanistic Studies. We have five projects running at the moment, for example. Strong projects, international projects, projects in cooperation in fields that vary from literature, storytelling, to linguistics, social linguistic, political philosophy... There's one with biomedicine, discourses and narratives of biomedicine. This was absolutely impossible to happen, let's say, 15 to 20 years ago. Now, what I'm really worried about is that we go back to this zero, this annihilation or this non-existence because in the last call for projects, from the 11 projects that we submitted, none was funded and they were all very highly rated and very well assessed. So, what does this mean? That the cuts for Humanities were so strong that even projects rated as excellent were not funded. That's extremely worrying. How can you resist this? It's really difficult. We have to have a lot of support from each other, we have to have lots of young people, post-docs, new blood, people that are not so exhausted from routines and daily chores and the administration and that really... put a lot of effort and energy and time into creating ideas that seem to appeal not just to people working in Humanities, but somehow have that crossover with the so-called hard sciences because it seems that at the moment they are the only ones that are being funded.

***Yes, it's worrying. Those rated as excellent are not getting any funding... Strong issues that should be addressed. Right now it seems that there's a widespread institutional pressure towards what is being called "excellence" translated into international research, strong competition and specifically publication in journals with known impact factor. It seems to be reduced to that. In Portugal, for the Social Sciences and Humanities field, this means following core countries, especially Anglo-Saxon ones and also core languages, in this case, basically, English, and also applying for European funding. That's what excellence seems to mean right now. Is this the case in Portugal, in our country? And what do you think the implications of these priorities – strong competition, international research, publication in impact factor journals – can be for the work of researchers and also for the diversity and quality of the research, specifically in Portugal?***

I think it's worrying again. On one hand, it's dangerous if we adopt the discourse that denies any kind of competition... We all want to be read widely, we all want to have our publications in the net, we all want to attract consortiums and international visibility. We learnt all that and we know that's important. It's important to be part of international networks. It's also important to be part of international projects, and curiously enough, recently, we heard our rector saying, in the latest evaluation of the Universidade do Minho, that's as a whole, the Universidade do Minho was much more successful in European projects than in nationally funded projects, which is quite curious and awkward, to say the least. This means that the researchers in Portugal know how to build strong projects because they get the funding from European institutions, right? So it means that they have impact in their research... I'm lucky enough to have colleagues from different areas and many friends

working in different fields and so I really believe, on the one hand, it's very important, for example, to have our journals from our research centres – and we have one that is quite well-known in our centre – and to have a virtual platform that 's accessible... This is good. The impact that our papers get when the publications are accessible online is definitely very important. But I have many colleagues that write in Portuguese because their field is Portuguese literature and therefore the Portuguese language is a very important vehicle to express their field of research, and often is the very object of research, when we talk about Portuguese linguistics, for example. So, when we talk about the impact of these journals, of these publications, of course it's a different kind of impact because English as, you know, the academic language, so to speak, but it is not one that can be used always and all the time and by every researcher. So here's an exceptional situation, so to speak, which doesn't mean that the journals where these colleagues are publishing are not as good, but definitely they are not all the time the ones that have the widest impact. So, that's a worrying situation and an issue that we'd like to see discussed more openly.

Then, there's concept of slow science, as well. The concept of slow science is being discussed by many people, by intellectuals in many places of the world and also by very well known and reputed intellectuals in Portugal too. People like Eduardo Lourenço or even António Nova, the rector of Universidade de Lisboa, to name just a few, have named this as an important concept. It's not, again, nostalgia when we talk about slow science. No: it's a different way of operating. Not necessarily a kind of going back to the past. It's calling attention to the need to reflect a bit more when we are wanting to present a paper, then to publish the paper... to have a better way to judge rather than just what's the best journal to publish when you talk about impact. Not just that... what suits me better? What's the best journal for the kind of work that I do without immediately thinking in terms of its impact in comparison to other journals? So, it's really very, very, problematic in our areas to think in those terms. And we cannot apply just one rule, which is the same for every field or area of research, that's for sure.

Let me just add something because I think it's often forgotten. In terms of publications, it should be noted that we, in the Humanities and Social Sciences, value more the publications in books, monographs, rather than in papers, which is exactly the opposite from our colleagues that do exact sciences or hard sciences. A monograph, a book, that we manage to edit, to put together is a tremendous effort, and definitely it's always been considered the best form of achievement for a researcher in our areas. And again that does not compare, by these rules that tell us, you know, "journals with impact"... A book is not a journal for a start and the impact of a book cannot be measured in this sort of way, so here is another important thing...

***We have talked about resistance already, but a final question: What examples of resistances to this context, basically of crisis discourses, can you point out? You have already talked about culture. How can alternative forms of governance and education and research be imagined and enacted? You have already mentioned the discussion about slow science... How can we search for alternative forms of running education and research?***



The first thing is to be able cope with all this without really feeling totally annihilated and discouraged and depressed. That's pretty difficult at the moment because, you see, we have to apply and apply, and apply yet again for projects to be refused, not to be granted with the money that we asked for, and still we have to do a project again next year. So that's endurance. The word endurance for me is very much related with the word resistance. And endurance has nothing to do with a kind of compliance. No, to endure is to have resilience in order to go through difficult times. To resist and still go on, when so very often you feel like "that's it...that's enough! Let me go to my little ivory tower and write my poems, write my essays on the poems that I like, and give my classes, and enjoy what am I doing", in a very individualistic sort of way. That's what is happening, dangerously enough, to many of us that work in these fields. We have built alliances with people, we have constructed project networks, we have constructed cooperations of different kinds, we have done transdisciplinary work in fields where before it wasn't heard of. The word "transdisciplinarity" was a dirty word. And I believe that we managed to do so and to transform that word into something respectable, so, as I was saying, at the moment, the big slogan, the big motto, is "resilience, endurance and resistance"! For how long are we going to cope, I don't know. I am pretty sure that these times are not going to go away this fast. They came really fast but probably they are going to be a bit longer than we would have liked them to. And we have to find ways to keep struggling and resist and still create, be creative. I find culture, again, a wonderful stronghold, as I said before, in the sense that it's not a niche, it's not a ghetto... let's not understand it like that. I understand it not as a comfort zone; culture is not a comfort zone. Culture should be understood as something that is disquieting, something that is provoking, something that makes you uncomfortable at times, but it's a continuous challenge. So do we have to do? We have to continue producing our challenges, and keep going!

Braga, University of Minho, May 29, 2013

## Interview with António Magalhães



António M. Magalhães (PhD, University of Twente, The Netherlands) is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto where he acts as Vice-president of the Scientific Board and Head of the Department of Education Sciences. He is also Senior Researcher at the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies (CIPES) and member of its Directive Board.

His field of expertise lies on education policy analysis with a focus on higher education policies. More specifically, his research interests include the reconfiguration of state intervention in education and the role of knowledge in education, economy and citizenship. He is the author of, amongst other books, *A Identidade do Ensino Superior: Política, Conhecimento e Educação numa Época de Transição* (2004), dealing with the relationship between politics, education and knowledge in higher education. In 2013 he co-edited and authored a book on higher education students' satisfaction, and published several articles in scientific journals such as *Higher Education Quarterly*, *Higher Education Policy*, *Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas*, *Higher Education*, among others For more information, please see: [http://sigarra.up.pt/fpceup/en/FUNC\\_GERAL.FORMVIEW?p\\_codigo=234316](http://sigarra.up.pt/fpceup/en/FUNC_GERAL.FORMVIEW?p_codigo=234316)

### ***How has the notion of crisis entered discourses about higher education and research?***

"Crisis" is indeed a notion rather than a concept. It is an ideograph in the sense that it puts together events, common sense ideas and has the potential to provide meaning to social events and contexts.

The idea of crisis has impinged on higher education and research long before the present crisis. It must be taken into a longer term perspective. In actual fact, in the second half of the last century a "crisis" has emerged in higher education as consequence of the

change in the relationship between higher education and research. In the 1950s higher education was referred to as “university education”, later, with the rise of polytechnic and vocational institutions in European higher education systems, it became “higher education”. In the last decades of the twentieth century “tertiary education” became a common designation for higher education (e.g. OECD documents), with blurred frontiers with post-secondary education. The “name” of the “thing” has major implications for the meaning of higher education and its relation with research. Research and education in modern universities were conceived as being tightly linked. In the Humboldtian and Newmanian narratives on universities, for instance, this linkage was the basis of what was “higher” in higher education. The diversification of higher education as a response to the pressures mass demand for this level of schooling and to the increasing of “external” (i.e. economic sphere) pressures introduced a long term and enduring crisis in higher education identity as form of education. Are teaching higher education institutions (without research) still performing “higher education”? Universities were until recently the main *loci* where research was undertaken. Now it can be developed, and quite efficiently, at research centres that hardly can be pointed out as “higher education institutions”.

The present crisis, due to financial stringency, hardened this enduring identity crisis. In the last decades, under the influence of governance and managerial narratives, such as, for instance, New Public Management, the universities started a move from knowledge centred institutions to service providers institutions, acting firms as role models and, consequently, enhancing managerial processes and structures within institutions. This shift is having major impacts on higher education institutions’ missions and strategies.

Actually, the present crisis is pushing the longer term crisis to its ultimate limits.

***How has it been used to construct problems and offer putative solutions in the discourses of politicians, research institutions, universities and the European Union regarding social sciences and the humanities?***

The myth of the university as an “ivory tower” produced discourses on the research agenda setting as if universities were not from this world. This myth was replaced by another one: the myth of “relevance”. In the aftermath of Lisbon Strategy, in 2000, political and governance discourses on the importance that institutions - both research centres and universities - for social development have been emphasising the need to link to the economic, industrial and commercial worlds. Michael Gibbons, Peter Scott and Helga Nowotny, to mention only these researchers, identified the shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 of knowledge production, i.e. the shift from disciplinary based and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake to transdisciplinary and applied knowledge production. As universities and research units are increasingly seen as organizations that must respond efficiently to changes in their environment and the emphasis of funding policies is put on performance based indicators they strive to be both relevant and socially accountable. The European Union has made clear that the governance reform and the funding reform are closely linked.

This has had major impacts on the research agenda setting of social sciences and humanities. The emphasis on social and relevance and on accountability has been pressuring

and reconfiguring the discourses on research and on project design, particularly in social sciences. Social sciences have always been relevant, but now they must produce “value for money”. In turn, research in the field of humanities run the risk of being “irrelevant” under the influence of the prevailing governance narratives and their focus on relevance and accountability.

However, as history has been showing, and as Guy Neave has emphasised, relevance, like treason, is a question of time...

***How does the crisis discourse in education and research intertwine with other crisis discourses (cultural, financial, political)?***

The present crisis has enhanced the colonisation of academic, scholar discourses by economic and managerial discourses. A brave new semantics has been brought to education and research fields: “entrepreneurship”, “benchmarking”, “good practice”, “good governance”, “efficiency and effectiveness”, “stakeholders”, “performance indicators”, etc. This semantics reflects a new social and political grammar impinging on universities and research centres internal lives. Research has been showing how rectors, deans and directors are reconfigured as managers. Their identity narratives mirror a split - and sometimes fragmentation - of their self-stories between academic and managerial profiles. In turn, under this increasing prevalent semantics and grammar, the academic constituencies - professors, students and administrative staff - are reconfigured as “internal stakeholders”. This of course influences the forms under which research projects are settled and developed as well as it influences the designs of curricula.

The “crisis”, as an ideograph, has increased the hegemony of the economic discourse and its related counterpart, the managerial discourse. However, one should not overemphasise the “passivity” of academics as if they were in a position “under attack” by external discourses (economic and managerial), because significant parts of academic communities were, and are, participating in this discursive reconfiguration of education and research. “How can we know the dancer from the dance?”, Yeats asked...

***How is the role of the state in research and education being revised and with what implications? How is the scope of freedom and creative potential of researchers being affected in a context where markets seem to rule?***

The role of state has been changing under the influence of new governance narratives. The model of state control was found to be inefficient due to the classic bureaucratic organization and the weight of bureaucrats in policy making. Since the eighties, most of European states moved from the state control model to the supervisory model. The latter is based on the assumption that the more autonomous institutions are the more efficient in their response to the “moving” world surrounding them. The reforms of public administration across Europe followed this trend, education included. Higher education system and institutions, at least in Portugal, were front-runners in the process of attribution of broad autonomy to education institutions.

Under the model of state control, academic freedom, the individual liberty to design one’s own teaching and research agendas was guaranteed by the state itself. In turn,

autonomy is attributed by the supervisory state to institutions rather than to individual academics. The freedom to design and manage education and research agendas was put under the attributions of the self regulatory capacity of institutions with obvious impacts on individual academics' priorities.

This new form of governance is visible at the European, national institutional levels and is based on governance instruments (e.g. funding, evaluation) rather than on government programmes. It is also grounded on a strong emphasis on "third party" partners (e.g. industry, commerce, social movements). Additionally, it induces networking as a privileged form of organization and, in some cases, promoting fragmented or shared decision-making processes and structures.

As the governance narratives were hijacked by the neo-liberal discourse on economy and politics (as reflected, for instance, in the New Public Management governance narrative) the potentialities of institutional autonomy run the risk to be restricted to serve the New Jerusalem of relevance, efficiency, accountability and "value for money". Western European states have not only been promoting market regulation in economy and society as a whole but also inside the public systems. Quasi-markets were created inducing public institutions to compete for students and for funding. The assumption is that the more competitive they are the more accountable and socially/economically relevant they are.

In my view, this regulatory context is having major consequences on research and on professors and researchers' creativity and freedom to pursue knowledge. Research must be relevant and fundable; education must attract students and, at least potentially, guarantee to graduates a position in the labour market. How can "irrelevant" research in philosophy or ontology, for instance, or in classical studies expect to be funded? We can develop with our students discourse analysis theories and methods in our classes, seminars and conferences, but can we compete for funding with "evidence-based" projects in the field, for instance, of education policy analysis? I doubt it.

***Who drives research policies? The Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation cites Germany as a model and claims that the way it can help the Portuguese scientific community be successful in Europe calls is by promoting a "greater alignment with the European programmes". To what extent are core countries setting standards, research areas and priorities, and how can that impact on social sciences and humanities, which are context-specific?***

In research undertaken at the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies (CIPES) in 2009-2013 in the framework of a European project (promoted by the European Science Foundation and funded by FCT – the Portuguese Science Foundation), we concluded that European Union policies related to evaluation and funding are promoting a political common grammar, making the case for European governance. Research has shown that the European Union institutions are modeling higher education by disseminating common legitimating policy discourses on higher education and on research policies. It has been recognized by the European Commission that evaluation in higher education (based on the setting up of national agencies and/or quality assurance systems) is a political area of "marked success".

However, the European meta-governance influenced with variable extension and intensity, in the areas of evaluation and funding, European countries, reflecting national specificities. With regard to the funding reforms, national governments appear to articulate the European Union policies and point out to the assumption that in the future the bulk of resources should be provided by non-public sources and adopt performance-based indicators. Along with evaluation, funding reforms are expected to meet the objectives of the EU modernisation agenda.

In this context, the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation is also promoting a “greater alignment with the European programmes”. However, when looking at the resources and power relations based on national economies, European core countries are not only aligning with European policies but also promoting and nourishing them as they are in a much better position in the wider competition for funding at the European level and for competition in the global higher education market. In my view, context specific education programmes and research projects are at risk to be pulled to the periphery of the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area.

***In Portugal there is a widespread institutional pressure towards excellence, translated into the internationalization of research, strong competition and publication in journals with known impact factor. In Portugal, for the social sciences and humanities fields, this means following core countries – Anglo-Saxon ones – and core languages – basically English – and applying for European funding. What are the implications of these priorities for the work of researchers and for the diversity/quality of research?***

This is the case of Portugal, Portuguese higher education institutions, research centres and individual researchers and academics. “Publish or perish” is a mantra that is being promoted at the national and institutional levels. Its impact on academic and research activities must be further researched, but the Englishfilia, the need to select adequate scientific journals to publish the results of research, the emphasis on outputs of projects and the quantity of publications needed to have a “proper” evaluation is having major consequences on the diversity and quality of research and its outputs.

In Portugal, for instance, the cooperation with higher education institutions and research centres in Portuguese speaking countries will reflect these trends. I think that it is already resenting that. Cooperation is being increasingly replaced by networking partnerships based on partners’ academic and scientific prestige. Brazil, Angola and Mozambique, to mention only these countries, do not appear as priorities in the strategic plans of most of the Portuguese higher education institutions. On the other hand, the core countries and highly ranked institutions are competing for these market niches.

Finally, the research and education agendas, as already said above, are being colonised by the semantics and grammar of the economic and managerial discourses prevailing in the sector and promoted by the European Union level, the national level and, last but not least, the institutional level. In social sciences, for instance, the specificities of semi-peripheral societies and states are far from the front stage of research agendas.



***What examples of resistance to the crisis discourse can you point out? How can alternative forms of governance in education and research be imagined and enacted?***

Ronald Barnett reminded that authenticity can only be achieved by confronting inauthenticity. As academics and researchers, we can and we do resist to the negative effects (as far as they are identified as such...) of the hegemony of the practices and discourses based on relevance, accountability, “value for money”, etc. But, as already said, one must not forget that academics and researchers are not only playing the game but also, at least some of them, nourishing it. Again, Yeats question comes to mind: “How can we know the dancer from the dance?”...

That said, one must not forget that the past regulation and organization of research and higher education should not be idealized. The “ivory tower” never existed, universities and their graduates were always part of the social fabric, economic and political systems. On the other hand, the Humboldtian and the Oxbridge models of universities were elitist, selecting the rulers and the state officers among the ruling classes and groups. Finally, collegial governance might have corresponded to a Republic of Scholars, but it was far from being democratic...

Probably social systems have no exterior, and the way to resist is to advance discourses and practices that promote what is “higher” in higher education, i.e., to educate via research. How can we do that in a higher education mass system? This seems to me an “authentic” question to be answered.

Porto, July 18, 2013

## Interview with Johannes Angermüller



Johannes Angermüller is Professor of Discourse at the University of Warwick. He coordinates DiscourseNet (<http://www.discourseanalysis.net>) and is the PI of the ERC DISCONEX research group “The Discursive Construction of Academic Excellence” at Warwick and EHESS (<http://www.johannes-angermuller.net/DISCONEX>). Having obtained a PhD from the Universities of Paris 12 and Magdeburg in 2003, he was a Professor at the University of Mainz, Germany (W1, in the domain of the “sociology of the university”). His publications include *Nach dem Strukturalismus* (2007), a book in French and English on the Field of Theory. *The Rise and Decline of Structuralism in France* (Hermann, 2013, Continuum, 2014), a book on poststructuralist discourse analysis (Lambert Lucas, 2013, Palgrave, 2014) as well as *Discourse Studies Reader*, edited with Dominique Maingueneau and Ruth Wodak (John Benjamins, 2014). More on his work can be found at <http://www.johannes-angermuller.net>. You are invited to check out <http://www.discourseanalysis.net> to register and get the latest news in discourse analysis.

### ***How has the notion of crisis entered discourses about higher education and research?***

We certainly can cite many examples of crises in higher education and research now and in the past. It much depends on where you look and when. Before becoming a professor of discourse in the UK, I was a professor of sociology of higher education in Germany and I obtained my PhD in France. I remember the deep and prolonged economic crisis afflicting Germany from 1992 to around 2005. There were quite significant salary cuts around 2000 in German universities and now salaries (of professors) seem to be rising whereas British universities saw major spending cuts in the mid-1980s under Thatcher, then a relative growth of university salaries and now the fat years are over again. In France, the number of fulltime researchers has been growing steadily whereas salaries have been in a slow but

consistent decline for about 30 years. However, we should be cautious with official statistics which can hide certain developments like the deterioration of junior academic jobs in Germany, where a very large proportion of academic staff work on precarious 50% contracts or less. At Mainz, where I was before going to the UK, a whopping 94% of academic staff are on temporary contracts, about 50% of them for one year or less. This is of course not in any way productive for anybody. But what I want to emphasise is that there is no uniform development: different fields in different countries are affected in quite different ways.

Crises usually appear as a reaction to a perceived mismatch between objective possibilities and subjective expectations. In higher education, we have seen many such critical periods. Thus, the student revolts of the 1960s took place against the background of an unprecedented increase of student numbers as well as of academic positions, especially in the social sciences and humanities, which was a big challenge for local academic hierarchies. Today, a similar development can be witnessed in China even though I don't know to what degree similar critical potentials have been forming. Most higher education systems have continued to expand since the peak of the enormous growth rates in the early 1970s. Some systems like Spain and Portugal saw some dynamic growth in the 1980s and 1990s. If governments cut spending for higher education (e.g. in Great Britain under Thatcher and again today), private institutions have continued to grow in certain countries (e.g. in some Eastern European countries). Therefore, if we take a global perspective as John Meyer does, there has been a more or less uninterrupted expansion of the higher education system since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Yet there is a widespread feeling that higher education is in crisis again today, which may have been spurred by a number of developments:

1. An economic crisis: as governments slash funding for students, tuition fees to pay for mass education have been soaring, especially in universities of the Anglo-American world, where higher education is increasingly becoming a profit-oriented business. In Germany, by contrast, it now turns out that the attempt to establish tuition fees has failed and all German states are returning to free higher education. Yet at the same time, never have there been more German students having to do casual jobs during their studies. Therefore, as Bourdieu reminds us, if higher education has always been a means for the upper and middle class to dominate the lower classes, this domination has become especially pervasive today. In many professions, you can no longer choose between higher education or vocational training. Higher education has almost become a universal standard while access to higher education is far from universal.
2. A political crisis: The economic crisis is tightly connected with a political crisis especially the one we can currently see in Europe. If not every country is entitled to a strong higher education system, the question of who has a voice in educational policy-making and who does not can be raised. In the EU, the top institutions in higher education are all in rich countries. This is not only the fault of the current German neo-liberal hegemony in the EU, which forces "uncompetitive countries" to reduce state services such as higher education system (see e.g. the

EuroMemorandum 2012. European integration at the crossroads: Democratic deepening for stability, solidarity and social justice, produced by the EuroMemo Group, based in Germany), but also an effect of new technologies of academic governance which aim at creating a global market of higher education by means of rankings and comparisons on a global scale. As a consequence, academic prestige and power is concentrated in very few places (Harvard, Oxford, etc.). I certainly don't want to speak out for a return to national parochialism but we need to address questions of democracy if the top tier of higher education is monopolised by a few elite institutions in a few countries.

3. A disciplinary crisis: We can mention another crisis, which testifies to the shifting prestige, legitimacy and popularity among the disciplines. While research in some disciplines is seen as providing solutions to pressing social problems (e.g. economics until the 2008-9 financial crisis), others have experienced a legitimisation crisis (e.g. letters since the 1970s). Some disciplines (e.g. engineering) fail to attract large student numbers despite the significant political support given to them. The crisis of these disciplines is due to the changing political climate outside (e.g. letters failing to be socially useful, economics failing to solve the financial crisis, engineering perceived as masculinist and "boring" for female and many male students). New fashionable funding schemes have deepened these crises. We can think of fields like biotechnology, information science, nanotechnology, and climate research, which have seen massive funding for a few years until the big money goes elsewhere to fund the current fad.

***How has it been used to construct problems and offer putative solutions in the discourses of politicians, research institutions, universities and the European Union regarding social sciences and the humanities?***

What comes to my mind of course is the idea, dear to a few policy makers (especially in the Anglo-American world), that the best solution to the current problems is to privatise and commercialise higher education. Thus, the crisis discourse has helped to legitimate certain new approaches to higher education, notably entrepreneurial models of academic governance. Even though entrepreneurialism doesn't have to go hand in hand with cuts in funding, it has deeply changed the way academic institutions work. To get funding from national and European organisations, for instance, you increasingly need to prove your impact outside the academic sphere. This is not necessarily a bad thing but it can be prohibitive for certain types of research and fields. Moreover, decision-making in academic organisations is generally less democratic than it used to be. At the same time, junior researchers have become much more visible on the academic scene in Europe. But let's be very clear about two points:

1. You can't raise the quality of education by turning students into fee-paying customers. On the contrary, to get the best possible students and results, you need to pay them. This is especially clear with PhD students. There are many opportunities for getting funding for one's PhD, especially in the more prosperous countries of the West. That's a major reason for why these countries were able to monopolise the

global market of the best and brightest for a long time. Yet if you make them pay, you attract those for whom academic diplomas need to have pay off sometime. In the long run, this kills higher education since it needs people who do teaching and research for its own sake.

2. You can't raise the quality of research by making it a profit-oriented business. Research needs open exchange and free circulation of ideas. Research needs an academic commons.

You can't produce scientific ideas without exposing them to the critical attention of the whole community. Yet if research is subjected to the logic of a private business, it will cease to be scientific. Unfortunately, there is no public debate about the huge amounts of research money companies and other private organisations receive from governments in the West. Governments give more research money out to the private sector than to universities. Yet "private research" does usually not feed into any debate among researchers and is therefore more difficult to account for than public research, which receives the critical attention of the scientific communities. We wouldn't have any shortages in research funding if research money was used for research and not for subsidising profit-oriented businesses.

***How is the role of the state in research and education being revised and with what implications? How is the scope of freedom and creative potential of researchers being affected in a context where markets seem to rule?***

The question is what one means by saying that the state is on the retreat. Some people seem to claim that by turning to the "market" governments can spend less on higher education and research. It is hoped (especially among right-wing policy-makers) that by evoking the market they can mobilise funding from the private sector. However, it would be delusional to think that profit-oriented businesses would fund higher education and research. It is a fact that the private sector does not and will never fund teaching in any significant manner and businesses usually only fund research that is immediately relevant for their profit-making objectives (which I mostly have difficulty calling research because it's mostly about product development). Private donations are generally negligible even in the U.S. with its long tradition of giving out significant amounts of private money for strictly delimited purposes. Donation for non-profit organisation make up less than 0.3% of GDP in the U.S. and probably no more than 0.1% or 0.2% in most European countries. The phenomenon of sponsored education by private actors is usually much overestimated (not least because receivers have to publicise the donations they attract) even though it can make a big difference in certain small areas. But there is no just way you would run a whole educational system on money from private businesses (even in the U.S., which is rather exceptional in its decentralised and hybrid structure, I would guess that more than 80% of funding for teaching and *basic* research comes from government, most of it course through indirect channels like tax breaks, as well as from the students and their families).

There is just no evidence that you can really take away government funding from higher education without increasing tuition fees and thus squeezing more and more people from higher education (which few governments can really afford). The market in this first

sense just won't work. However, the market has been frequently evoked in a second sense as an entrepreneurial form of academic governance in a sector that continues to be funded by the state but in more "flexible" and "competitive" ways. In this second sense, the market has become a reality in many areas of higher education, especially in many European countries where universities may now be becoming even more entrepreneurial than in the U.S.

However, let's not forget that markets in this sense are deeply embedded in a set of governmental practices. And as theories of governmentality and of regulation have pointed out time and again, markets are not a given. They are created by means of governmental practices in order to control what people do and think, even though in camouflaged, indirect ways, from a distance. In fact, just like states markets are devices that coordinate people and they do not have to lead to different results. What can make markets dangerous is that they can make people do something they wouldn't do for the state. For the sake of economic success, certain British universities are about to admit large groups of former soldiers from civil war-ridden countries. Would they do that if a minister told them to do so?

Higher education has, as Burton Clark points out, always been subjected to the more rigid governmental practices of the (nation-) state and the more indirect governmental practices of the market. The last few years have seen the fashion of the Entrepreneurial University in many European countries, which is based on the idea – a bit naïve I would think – that universities should be liberated from the tutelage of centralised power. This shift towards the market pole may come with less centralised power, but it most certainly comes with more decentralised power, which is testified by the many new controlling, evaluation, audit schemes that keep us busy every day. It's difficult to imagine an academic system with no power at all. Yet power can be more or less productive. I would prefer a system where there is not only one power logic. It's good to have power logics in competition, to see their contradictions and their contingency. Power is not bad as long as we don't have to take it too seriously.

***Who drives research policies? The Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation cites Germany as a model and claims that the way it can help the Portuguese scientific community be successful in European calls is by promoting a "greater alignment with the European programmes". To what extent are core countries setting standards, research areas and priorities, and how can that impact on social sciences and humanities, which are context-specific?***

I'm not sure what's the part of institutional fantasy in citing the German model but as I said in the beginning we should be very careful not to buy into the myth of the "German model". In the EU, the "success" of Germany is based on a double exploitation. German capitalists have gained a considerable competitive edge over other European economies by slashing the salaries of German workers since the Euro came into being and greatly increasing the number of precarious contracts, and German universities are no exception to this development. Since the outbreak of the Euro crisis, the German government forces this regime on other Euro countries, in the South and France, who have to reduce their investments in higher education and sacrifice a whole generation in the name of competitiveness and productivity. I therefore don't think the crisis can be solved by copying the "German" way



of running the economy or higher education. It's like chasing each other to attain ever lower economic but also civilizational levels.

But you don't need to share such a diagnosis and most Germans certainly don't. Of course there's a German model in academic governance, which is the professor as the head of an autonomous intellectual-administrative unit, i.e. a holder of a chair with a team of research assistants, administrative staff, personal students etc. This is a rather unique system in that professors reunite both intellectual and organisational leadership and they are more or less the only status category to enjoy life-time jobs. In the U.S., the UK and most of the Latin countries (with the exception of Italy and Switzerland) departments are usually not organised around chairs and they are more like integrated organisations with a larger permanent workforce.

Now, the German model has two somewhat contradictory effects on the careers of junior academics: on the one hand, they need to build up their own autonomous project and team over time; on the other hand, they have to stay on precarious contracts as dependent assistants of a full professor until late in their academic careers. I don't want to bash this system, which I enjoyed in many respects (I especially liked the long time I could take to develop my own authentic research orientations). It has therefore been successful in producing many excellent researchers many of whom are pursuing academic careers all around Europe. The problem is that junior researchers are held in precarious situations for too long (usually until the age of 45, when some obtain a chair and others drop out), which is why German policy-makers have come up with all kinds of ideas to make academic careers more predictable. I would be in favour of the French, Spanish and UK model, where academics can get tenure right after their PhD. Austria, too, has now implemented a system which allows to create tenure-track positions like in the U.S.

For the time being, German policy-makers have been experimenting with special junior elite programmes that help junior researchers to develop their own projects early on in their careers. I may be wrong but I guess that the young researcher groups that have proliferated all over Europe are modelled after the DFG Emmy-Noether young researcher groups which began in the mid-1990s. These prestigious awards (usually around million euros) allow a small elite of junior researchers to lead a team of doctoral students over five to six years. I don't know whether these new programmes have made junior academic careers less precarious but they have certainly created the incentive for young researchers to become more mobile and "entrepreneurial".

Another example of what really may be considered as a German model at the European scale is the way the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) works. Like the research councils in the UK, DFG is the main research-funding organisation in Germany with a multi-billion research budget every year and the money is mostly distributed competitively and in a rather transparent and professional way. It is academics, not politicians or administrators, who evaluate each other in a peer system of specialised panels that decide on how to distribute the money in the respective fields. This is an institutional model that until recently had been unknown in many other countries, especially in Eastern Europe and the Latin world, where

research money was channelled through the ministries, whose scientific expertise in evaluating proposals is limited. Both the European Research Council and the recently founded French *Agence Nationale de la Recherche* (ANR) seems to have been modelled after DFG.

***In Portugal there is a widespread institutional pressure towards excellence, translated into the internationalization of research, strong competition and publication in journals with known impact factor. In Portugal, for the social sciences and humanities fields, this means following core countries – Anglo-Saxon ones – and core languages – basically English – and applying for European funding. Is that the case Germany, France, the UK and other countries? What are the implications of these priorities for the work of researchers and for the diversity/quality of research?***

It really depends on the disciplinary field and the country. Some fields such as economics and the natural sciences are organised around a peer review system of English-speaking flagship journals. As long as these journals, indicators and rankings play a real role in their everyday academic practice, they are meaningful signals of academic excellence in the community. Yet many fields are organised like that and it makes little sense to rely on external artificial indicators whose importance we shouldn't overestimate. Also, there is not one recipe that can be applied to all situations. It may be more important to have a strong record of journal publications if you want to apply for research funding; for a professorship, by contrast, books may be more important. At any rate, the importance of English publications is probably growing at least for those who want to go for European research money. But for the great majority of academics in Europe it doesn't make sense to publish in English and certainly not in English *only* if they want to establish themselves in communities whose vernacular is not English.

In our DISCONEX project at Warwick in the UK and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris ("The Discursive Construction of Academic Excellence" funded by the European Research Council 2013-2018), which compares various fields in the Social Sciences and Humanities in the U.S., Germany and France, we investigate the ways in which researchers succeed in the academic business. We have just started with the project but what I can already say is that the importance of standard ISI (Institute of Scientific Information, presently Thomson-Reuter's Web of Science) and Google Scholar indicators circulating out there is wildly overestimated. It is true that there is an increasing offer of numeric representations of research quality and especially younger researchers may believe they are monitored by these figures but I don't see any evidence that these indicators have become any more relevant in decision-making situations such as third-party funding decisions or job recruitments. In no way is decision-making an automatic process that can be based on one single standard, quantitative or not. On the contrary, decision-makers always have to reconcile many different criteria, expectations and practices, and quantitative indicators may contribute to "objectifying" or reinforcing certain aspects of an application but there are many other aspects that just cannot be quantified.

Generally speaking, we have found that the excellence of academic researchers is based on the personal or virtual ties, on the many formal and informal relationships

they create with other people in their communities during their careers. If the challenge for researchers is to exist for other researchers, they need to use oral and written texts and engage in positioning work at different levels at once: they need to act as immediate colleagues in the local hierarchies of a department or university but also as peers in national networks and milieus, and last but not least they also need to relate to the canonical references in global disciplinary fields and communities. As a rule, researchers consider those researchers as “successful” who can occupy a position in this multileveled space and who navigate in all these local, national and global levels at the same time. Of course the most existential question for them is where they can be recruited for permanent positions and we shouldn’t forget the importance of local and national levels for academic recruitment. Even institutions that pride themselves on their international research stars (Harvard, Oxford, ETH Zurich...) recruit the large majority of their staff from their respective academic system. The academic business is really not so much about h-indices and “high impact” journals, which make some people forget about the many *different* competencies researchers need to have in order to fill a position. It is more important to make sure that you end up with a *balanced* profile that will make sense for the specific place and its environment where you will end up someday. Departments don’t recruit h-indices and you won’t really succeed in the academic business anywhere if you place a few articles in U.S. flagship journals without relating to your local or national colleagues.

***What examples of resistance to the crisis discourse can you point out? How can alternative forms of governance in education and research be imagined and enacted?***

I think the first thing everybody can and should do is to sign up for one’s union. They are there to help in case of problems and if you don’t have a problem you can still help them with your monthly fee to help others.

Another thing I see among younger researchers is that they tend to be better organised today and communicate more among themselves. They are the most vulnerable ones in the system and they need to have a voice. Most disciplinary associations are now open to student members who start to organise their own conferences and networks. There are grass-roots initiatives like the hugely successful campaign *Templiner Manifest* by the German Union for Education Workers (GEW) or the 2011 Summer Factory on education by the Institute of Solidary Modernity (ISM) in Germany, the grass-roots initiative HackYourPhd in France or the Blockupy events in the defence of the Public University in the UK. All of that seems to testify to the increased attention higher education enjoys nowadays as a pressing political issue of our time.

Generally speaking, I think it is a big problem that even though the money spent on higher education in Europe is probably still growing, more and more money is put into precarious third-party funding and not into the creation of good permanent jobs, especially in Germany, which in this respect can be much less of a model than the Spanish and French systems. The question of how to recruit is certainly a crucial but also a hard one. In some countries (e.g. in the early 1980s in Italy and, to some degree, in France), a whole cohort of junior staff was suddenly given tenure, which then blocked the system for a whole

generation. Austria has now shown how to increase the number of fulltime, permanent staff slowly but steadily. But I think we really need to observe other systems more and compare what works and what doesn't.

Warwick, September 2013

## Interview with John Richardson



BY ANABELA CARVALHO

John E. Richardson is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University. He is Editor of the international peer-review journal *Critical Discourse Studies* and is on the editorial boards of *Discourse and Society*, *Discourse & Communication*, *Social Semiotics*, the *Journal of Language and Politics* and CADAAD, amongst other journals. His research interests include structured social inequalities, British fascism, racism in journalism, critical discourse studies and argumentation. His publications include: the books *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers* (2004, paperback edition 2009), *Analysing Journalism: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* (2007), *Language and Journalism* (ed. 2010), *Analysing Media Discourses* (2011, co-edited with Joseph Burridge), and *Analysing Fascist Discourse: European Fascism in Talk and Text* (2013, co-edited with Ruth Wodak); and academic articles on critical discourse studies, newspaper representations of Muslims, balance and impartiality in BBC reporting of Israel/Palestine, argumentation in readers' letters, political communications and party political leaflets. His co-authored book *Key Concepts in Journalism Studies* (2005) has been translated into Chinese and Japanese. He is currently writing a book offering a Discourse Historic Analysis of British fascist discourse (ibidem-Verlag, 2014) and co-editing a book on Cultures of Post-War British Fascism (Routledge, 2014).

Anabela Carvalho is Associate Professor at the Communication Sciences Department and a member of the *Communication and Society Research Centre* (CECS), University of Minho, Portugal.

***Anabela Carvalho – How has the notion of crisis entered discourses about higher education and research? And to what extent do you view this notion of crisis as an excuse for new definitions of the situation in higher education and in research, and as a justification for whatever changes are being implemented in those fields?***

**John Richardson** – The crisis in general, not just in education but in all areas of state spending with the exception of the police (or even with the police to an extent), is being used to roll back and to reduce the role of the state, particularly the expenditure of the state on public services. This is especially strongly felt in education, particularly higher education, because the private universities in the UK are all state-funded. They operate as companies largely. In terms of their income and expenditure, they expect to operate as profit centres but still are state-funded. So they operate under 100% state-funding, whether through central state funding or funding through research, and the crisis is being used to withdraw this, essentially. Before this year, students paid three thousand pounds a year in tuition fees but from September this year it's going to increase to nine thousand, and this is accompanied by a total reduction in central state funding. So the expectation is now that all degree programmes will be funded, in the case of humanities and social sciences, 100% on student tuition fees. It's the only place that they are getting money from.

The odd thing is that the students don't pay their tuition fees up front. They can do if they want to, so this benefits rich parents because you can give the university a cheque for nine thousand pounds. Otherwise you end your university education with twenty seven thousand pounds of debt, which you take out as a loan and then you repay that in the course of the next twenty years. It's essentially your first mortgage, whether you like it or not. Because this is accompanied by a reduction in quotas (most university degrees were quoted until now – a maximum forty, fifty students a year) there can be an increase in number of students and actually an increase in the amount of state funding, paradoxically, until all these students' loan situation work through the system and students actually stop paying it in the form of interest or anything else.

So it's peculiar. The ostensible reason for doing this is to save money. "Because of the crisis", "this is the only way", "we need to reduce government funding". What this is actually doing is increasing government funding while introducing a fully marketized system to higher education and secondly, settling students with debt. And they must know this. They must know the outcome of this. They must have done their sums. So it seems to be an almost entirely ideological agenda to kind of settle people with huge personal debt. I can't think of any other reason why they would do it. What it means of course is that some universities will go bankrupt because they won't be able to attract sufficient students, some degree programmes will be shut down.

***Is there political opposition to this?***

The problem is that the official opposition, the Labour Party, opposed the increasing fees; but they would oppose anything that the government does, that's what the opposition does even if they actually believe in it... It's just the game of politics. And any opposition that they have or had is ineffective rhetorically because of course they introduced fee themselves. They didn't actually have a workable argument to argue against the increasing fees. Given this general widespread acceptance of the crisis and that cuts must be made, they didn't have an ethical position to oppose fees and they didn't have a pragmatic reason to oppose it either. So it just went through.



***At some point there was lots of student protest. How is that now?***

It's gone. Effectively it was only in existence as a mass movement for about a period of six to eight weeks, immediately preceding Christmas in 2010. Essentially, when it was being debated in Parliament, there was still a possibility that the Liberal Democrat MPs, who had a manifesto pledge not to increase fees, it was them who were enabling the Tory party to push it through... So there was still a possibility that through lobbying, through pressure, through direct action, you would be able to convince the Lib Dems to stand on principle and not allow that to go through. Since then there have been a few marches, and there is a widespread sense of disquiet amongst young people, but it's sporadic. There would be a march or there would be a single event but there's no sense of extended periods of opposition, and it's only through extended periods of opposition that you are actually going to achieve anything. If it's a march or a single direct action you put police on the streets and it's neutralized to a large extent then everyone goes home.

***What impact does this have on the way universities are run? We have heard of enforced changes and reorganization of departments for quite a while. There were some iconic departments in British universities that were shut. How much have the social sciences and humanities been affected?***

It's hard to say. That's part of the general marketization of the higher education that you're seeing increasingly in the recent years. It's hard to say; it's like looking to a crystal ball, what's going to happen comes September. Some departments are reporting decreases in student applications, everywhere there's massive decreases in the numbers of mature students, because why on earth you go back to university as a mature student and settle yourself with that much debt? So that's almost entirely gone now, this notion of lifelong learning is completely gone.

***Which is ironic, because there is all this European Union discourse promoting lifelong learning. It's a significant thing on their agenda.***

Yes, there's still lip service paid to it in Britain but the basic economic facts are such that it just doesn't exist anymore. There may be some comparable uptake in the modularized degrees that are offered by the Open University perhaps, but even the Open University will be charging about nine thousand pounds equivalent for a year degree. I know someone who's doing some modules this year, and if he were to do it next year it would be almost four times as much: the difference between three-four hundred pounds for a module and one thousand pounds. It's just a completely insane increase.

So there is a complete drop in some types of students, often interested students. They will be closing degree programmes, particularly degree programmes that don't have a direct vocational career trajectory. There's direct pressures on courses like media studies to become more vocational, so the critical reflexive approaches of cultural studies, are being sidelined with a preferred emphasis on the kind of modules evolving picking up cameras and training you to do the real directly vocational transferable skills. And there will be universities closures. I think that everyone agrees that some universities will go bankrupt and will close;

it's just unclear which ones that will occur to. It's hard to speak of the university sector as a whole because it's so hierarchical in Britain. There are of course certain universities that this would barely touch: Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Bristol.

***Those universities have had a large chunk of private funding for a long time anyway.***

They get that, yes, for buildings or endowed professorships. So that strata will not be affected. Below that there's another strata that are allied to a group of universities called the Russell Group; it's about twenty two universities who are research intensive, again these universities won't be affected. It's the universities that used to be polytechnics, so the post-1992 universities and universities that lean much more heavily on teaching rather than research that tend to recruit working class students and particularly local students. Northumbria University is a very good, a very successful post-92 university, but still they recruit predominantly from local students, it's students from the surrounding area that will go there. It's universities like that predominantly with poorer students, working class students, that will go bankrupt. Some will for sure. It's just unclear which ones will go.

***Many of those students are not likely to have an alternative; they won't be able to afford going to universities elsewhere.***

Either they will be priced out of the degree full stop or they will be priced out because of the extra costs of living away from home or commuting, etc.

***Are tuition fees universal or are they based on income?***

It was meant to be based on income. But it's not clear exactly how it is going to work really. There will be some students that won't pay fees, and apparently there will be some form of single payment bursary, but it is all so wooly, it's all so vague, that I'm not sure if it has even been decided how many students, what level ... Because it's not a matter of policy, it's not a matter of legislation. They have to do something, but I don't think it's clear what is the minimum that they have to do, what they have to offer, it's on an ad hoc university basis, what a particular university wants to do, and the extent they want to offset departments that support other departments or offset students for students.

***What impact do all these changes have on research? Do you feel that there is a push towards certain areas of research that may be linked to the kind of transferable skills that you were talking about?***

The strange thing is that in addition to this marketized system that they are introducing, there is also still the remnant of the last system where every four to five years every department gets audited for their research outputs. Previously what this meant is that you get graded five, four, three and this relates to a certain amount of money. "Five" departments get awarded a certain amount of money, and so on. The feeling is that this will still happen, but only departments that are five or four will actually get anything at all and everyone else will get nothing. And as part of this research reassessment, one thing that you are meant to do is that your research needs to have an impact, in other words it needs to reach out beyond academia and have direct impact.

***How is that impact measured?***

It isn't, really. You have to make a rhetorical case. In what they meant by impact, they referred to two aspects: scale of impact and longitude, the duration of the impact. Of course for certain departments, like medicine, where a professor discovered a certain kind of drug, this is easy to demonstrate, but in humanities or classics, how do you make such a case? It becomes extraordinary difficult, particularly given that this was something that was only introduced three-four years ago, and given the duration that it usually takes to finish a research project and publish, many departments won't have the ability to actually make a case for the impact of their research. This means of course that they are not going to get the ratings; it means they not going to get any form of research funding; it means they're are even more liable for closure.

***What about the different funding councils in the UK? How has the money been adjusted in this situation of 'crisis' between different areas?***

First of all there's far less. Of course these funding councils have preferred research areas and one which produced a quite negative reaction about a year ago was when the ESRC introduced research funding for the Big Society. The Big Society is this empty idea of Cameron's to essentially get people to do work for nothing. It's kind of sense of "noblesse oblige". You do voluntary work instead of being paid to do a job that needs to be done. And this was introduced as a research theme for the AHRC. Essentially it's a speculative "find out what on earth this could mean"! So it wasn't "go and interview people and see what people's understanding of it were", it was almost using academics through a back door to formulate policy, to formulate suggestions of policy and how they could come up with better ways to communicate and firm up and make concrete this notion of the Big Society. So this is another way in which it is affected as well.

You also see that there's been an increase in the funding of studies of terrorism, how can we protect ourselves against Muslims. But that's a hangover from the Labour government, it has existed since 2005; so that's less about the economic crisis and more about a cultural crisis, those kind of racist ideas that prevail in British society unfortunately.

***So would you say that policies in other areas tend to impact on research policies? In terms of funding, for instance.***

They can do, certainly, and it tends to be at the level of the research councils that you see that. In the calls they usually have three kinds of preferred themes and a certain amount of money directly allocated to those themes. Of course they allow for other applications as well, but they are less likely to be approved.

***How is that felt at the departmental level? Is there any form of pressure or suggestions to go into those themes or not?***

I think again that it is difficult to speak in generalities, because those things affect different departments in different universities differently. Certainly in the university that I am at the minute, the faculty have identified that the section which I work in has a lower proportion of research applications than other areas in the faculty both numerically and

proportionally and therefore it has required us to identify from the people teaching in my department – there's ten of us – two people to commit to submit a large research application in the next academic year. It's certainly one thing that our department is doing that is new. It doesn't specifically say that they need to apply to these specific preferred topics of the research councils, but there's now a specific demand, built into your annual review, to do these applications. I imagine that in certain departments and certain universities there will be an even bigger pressure than that, because faculties are extremely worried about the drop in revenue, which will be caused by the drop in student numbers. So that money needs to be made somehow.

***I was talking to someone from a British university yesterday, from an English language department, and he said that he still writes his papers on his own, without funding and large collaborations.***

That's like me. I do that as well really. I don't apply for funding generally speaking. But this is an old way of doing things now. I don't think we are going to be allowed to do this for very much longer.

***How much do you think that is going to change research practice? Are you going to have the same freedom?***

You won't have freedom in terms of the amount of time you have to dedicate yourself to idiosyncratic topics. They will need to have impact or, at the very least, a pathway of impact, the potentiality for impact, which will need to be built into the work that you are planning, whether that's a funded project or a non-funded project, because there's an expectation that's now part of the air we breathe. Even if certain things are accounted should Labour get back in, I would be amazed if this notion of impact goes away. For some reason there's been a wide acceptance this is what we should be doing, maybe it is playing to the academic sense of ego: everyone wants to be a public intellectual. So people now just accept this as written that our work should be read by, and understood by and enjoyed by people outside of academia. And as a generalized principle, that's fine. But there also ought to be other types of research that only speak to academic interests or more exploratory research where you are not sure if what you are ever going to find anything. So first of all it is producing a sense of instrumentalism in research and secondly a sense of timidity where you go for certain types of projects. There's a widespread sense that you need to get publications out of something, you need to be able to produce. Those publications need to have appeal, so it structures the topics that you think about researching for many people. For those that it is not affecting yet, I think there's a sense that it will affect people in the future because otherwise you rely in the other members of your team for doing that, and that seems kind of unfair.

***Can you explain what impact means exactly? Is it about dissemination of research?***

It can be. For instance you can say as part of a research application that you will host a public event and you invite Unions, charities and Third Sector Organizations. That's your

pathway to impact. You can't guarantee they're going to turn up. It's only if they turn up and then you record it and do something with that. That's starting off impact. Then you need to demonstrate that you didn't just meet people and talked to them in a nice way, that it then affected the way in which they work. The only thing that I really have is my work on islamophobia, which is discussed still by bloggers, for example. It has for what I can gather made its way into certain policy documents and recommendations of the FRA, and the UMC before that, and we worked with the Commission for Racial Equality as well (that's not called that anymore). So you can see that your research is then used in some way by a public body in formulating policy.

***But so many of these are spontaneous occurrences. It doesn't necessarily make sense to plan it or to programme research impact.***

Of course you need a crystal ball to do be able to do this. It's impossible to predict other than through choosing really populist or explosive topics.

Because it's still working through it's hard to know the effect that it is actually going to have on research practice.

***I would like to ask you about the impact of other countries on research policies. For us this is a big thing. Portugal's research policies are very much shaped by the European Commission and by some countries seen as key, like Germany. Do you feel that in Britain?***

No. There's a sense that getting European funding through FP7 is a good thing, because it's prestigious and it's a lot of money. In a way I may be atypical because I never held a large research grant and I never really applied for very many of them, I have never really gone for that kind of money. So that kind of sense of whose agendas are being shaped at European level... Maybe some people are more aware of that than me. I haven't felt it in my work other than through the idea that those kinds of funds are prestigious funds.

***What about the journals in which you published, are there any pressures towards certain more prestigious journals? We keep being told that we have to publish in ISI journals or at least journals with some other impact factor.***

The great advantage for me is the accident of birth, that I'm British, and I speak and write in English. So I don't feel the same pressures that anybody born and living in other countries feels. Generally speaking those high impact journals are English language journals.

***But still there are lots of journals in English that are not ISI journals...***

In terms of this it's actually contradictory. They changed their mind. This revolves around the research evaluation and they started out by saying that as a measure of quality they will take into account the publication in which something appears. Since then they backtracked on that and said they will just look at the quality of the publication irrespective of where it appears. But most people don't believe this. They are meant to read everything but they don't. In the last assessment, I submitted a book and it came back with copious underlining and highlighting but they stopped halfway through the book, so they just read

half of the book, which is the introductory stuff, and not the actual application, where there is the actual contribution of the book. So given that, I found it dubious that they would read everything. To gauge the quality they will be looking at where something is published.

***Are there any examples of resistance to the crisis discourse and alternative forms of governance of education and research being imagined?***

No, not really. As I said before the students did revolt momentarily. That was actually really cool. They occupied areas of Newcastle University where I work, whole areas and there were hundreds of students who did it. For a while the staff took them food and drink, until we were threatened that we were not allowed to do that anymore. Unfortunately support should have been forthcoming from the Unions but our Unions are so bourgeois that they only ever strike for pay rises. They never strike, they never even offer the chance to strike in the form of a ballot, when the institution itself, when the ethos of higher education is attacked. It's only when we don't get the 2% pay rises, they only offer 1,5% pay rise, and everyone is up in arms and then there's a strike ballot. It's extraordinary and really very disappointing. The reason for this is that there will be certain universities who benefit from this. There will be universities who because of the crisis will be richer and more powerful and their position within the elite will be more secure. So because of this, there's not a sense of solidarity with academics working in the less prestigious universities, it seems to me. There's a lot of talk, and there's a lot of discomfort, and there's a lot of unease and arguments in staff rooms but it's not translating to action as I see it. We just hope that Labour comes back in, that's the way it works in Britain.

***We keep hearing of academics that are moving to China or India from Britain.***

Yes, this will happen. For example, I'm going to work in Loughborough from September and in Loughborough there are academics who by birth and by education and training are German, Swedish, Chilean, American and it may be that they go back, I don't know. But certainly talking to academics from outside Britain with children you hear them saying "we will teach our child German rather than English". There's a sense of a shift away of Britain as a center, a powerhouse of higher education. Why would you want to send your child there, why would you want to educate yourself there, why would you want to work there, because of the way the whole system is being destabilized and marketized to the extent that it is.

***Huge transformations...***

Potentially so, yes.

Braga, University of Minho, July 6, 2012



## Interview with Juana I. Marín-Arrese



BY HELENA PIRES

Juana I. Marín-Arrese is Professor of English Linguistics in the Department of Filología Inglesa I (English Language and Linguistics) at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Her main research interests involve the fields of evidentiality and modality, with specific interest in cross-linguistic studies on the expression of stance and subjectivity and intersubjectivity in discourse. She has coordinated several research projects on these topics and has published extensively in various journals and collective volumes: *Perspectives on Evidentiality and Modality* (Editorial Complutense, 2004); *English Modality in Perspective. Genre Analysis and Contrastive Studies* (Peter Lang, 2004); *Belgium Journal of English Language and Literatures* 5 (2007); *Modality in English. Theory and Description* (Mouton de Gruyter, 2009); *Studies on English modality. In Honour of Frank R. Palmer* (Peter Lang, 2009); *Critical Discourse Studies in Context and Cognition* (John Benjamins, 2011); *Discourse Studies* 13 (2011). For more information, please go to <http://www.researcherid.com/rid/B-8903-2009>.

Helena Pires is Assistant Professor at the Communication Sciences Department and a member of the Communication and Society Research Centre (CECS), University of Minho, Portugal.

**Helena Pires – The first question I would like to ask you is how has the notion of crisis entered discourses of higher education and research?**

**Juana I. Marín-Arrese –** In the Spanish context, the crisis is very much debated because of the cuts in education. There are cuts in teaching contracts and also in research. That is very much the focus. So, presumably we are supposed to carry on with the Bologna process, not only at zero cost, but having to undergo all these other cuts. At least in the community of Madrid this is the case.

***How do you think this has been used to construct problems and to offer a solution, considering politicians' discourse, in terms of the research institutions, universities and also the European Union? You talked about Bologna and political discourses.***

You know, for example, recently the Minister of Education was saying that there was no problem at all in increasing the number of students per class, and also in increasing the teaching time. We already have a huge amount of students and we have to teach the maximum number of the credits in my department. They are thinking of increasing our teaching several credits, of course that's going to have an impact on research. It's unavoidable, because teachers can't have a heavy teaching load and carry out quality research.

***Do you think there are some contradictions in the Bologna process?***

Absolutely! In the sense that the government seems to assume that we can carry on with the Bologna process, but at the same time having to accept all the increasing students plus increasing the time of direct contact in teaching, which is absolutely contrary to the Bologna process.

***Why aren't teachers and students very happy with this system? I hear many people, teachers, and sometimes also students, questioning this system.***

I think it's because it hasn't been implemented adequately. Because the Bologna process is very expensive if you want to implement it adequately. I mean, for example, by increasing direct contact teaching in seminars and by increasing tutorials. I think specially in Southern European countries we have a different tradition in teaching, kind of having these plenary sessions for hundreds of students.

***A heritage from the past...***

Exactly, and it's a sort of difficult to change. Of course, at least in my university, in my department, somehow because we have had contact with British models of teaching, there was no problem in accepting the Bologna type of model. But there has been a lot of resistance on the part of other departments. They have no tradition of this type of model.

***In the ways of teaching? So you think there is a cultural issue?***

Absolutely!

***And what about economic implications, because maybe also this model implies more money to spend with teaching in order to teach fewer students?***

It's an expensive model.

***And we are living through a crisis. Back to the theme, the economic crisis...***

And it's also a model where you somehow empower the student, making the student responsible for his or her learning process and, again, I think it is all a cultural thing, that some more traditional professors don't want to release that power.

***Do you think that the political discourse concerning education is significantly different from the discourse concerning financial issues and economics?***

On the one hand, officially they say they have to increase the quality in education, but then what they are saying in terms of scholarships is they are going to lower the scholarships, money cuts, but they are going to justify this by saying “well, what we are going to do, we are going to select students more thoroughly, students who are worthy of having the scholarships”. So what they are doing here, they are trying to transform this discourse of economic cuts, which is a pressure in some areas of society, into a kind of revision of the system to make it more efficient and competitive.

***In terms of ideology this selective system is not very respectful of democratic principles. Perhaps it's a contradiction. What do you think?***

I think somehow the idea is to give greater support to private universities. You know, those universities are supposed to educate a select minority. Public universities, because of these successive cuts, are also missing out on fees. They are going to, gradually, lose power in society.

***What about the researchers' freedom and creativity? How is this goal of freedom being affected?***

I think more and more when you get research funding programmes, you get a lot of the money being reserved for specific lines of research, and so either you try to get into one particular area of interest or else you will have a hard time getting funding. There are still general programmes in the humanities, but the standards are being raised since last year, so you have to have a higher level in your evaluation in order to get some funding, and of course the more restrictive the funding, the less space there is for more personal creativity or specific issues, which may not have clear applications in the short term, you know in terms of society, but their applications are more indirect.

***Yes, we can testify to that in Portugal.***

The actual format of the application that you have to fill in restricts your research. So very clearly you have to focus on empirical research.

***Maybe freedom and creativity concerning a research strategy are difficult because of those parameters. In Spain is there the expression “Excellence” as it exists in Portugal?***

In international publications.

***Publications in journals with impact, for example.***

But there is a paradox there. You get colleagues trying to publish their work in some journal in Romania because that's international versus a journal in Spain, which could be a far higher quality journal, but it's Spanish. It's preferable to publish your paper in Romania than in Spain, which is absurd. I think the important thing is to assess the quality of the journal, and what I find is that in the humanities area they are kind of applying the criteria that are valid in the sciences. But in humanities it is completely different. What is better, to

publish a paper in some journal with a lot of other papers, or other topics, or to be able to publish your paper in a specialized collective volume? And it may be more difficult to be able to publish in a particular volume, a selected volume, but that doesn't count, you know.

***What counts is the quantity?***

The important thing is journals, which is ridiculous, because some of the important stuff, at least in the Anglo-Saxon world, is actually published in collective volumes.

***And there's the question of language because, for example in Portugal, many researchers have good relationships with French researchers, for example with the Sorbonne. Some of our researchers and professors were students at the Sorbonne, and they have a good command of French. But it happens that the English language is quite oppressive in terms of publications.***

Right, right, if you want to publish you have to do it in English, that's a fact. And another thing as well: it's not just the language, it is all the system of knowledge. I mean, you find, for example, Lakoff saying things about metaphor that have already been said in Europe, but they don't read the Europeans.

***A different way of functioning, another system of thought.***

Yeah, and as we say in Spanish, they are really discovering the Mediterranean again in some cases, that is, for example, coming up with a theory of metaphor without relating it to all the previous theories. And so it's very much a dictatorship of knowledge, or controlling knowledge.

***Thinking, for example, about Spain and Portugal, maybe it is a prejudice of mine, but I think the Portuguese are making an effort to speak and write in English, but I have not experienced that in Spain. Spanish researchers have more difficulty to talk in English.***

Absolutely! In Spain there is a clear ideological split between for example people in English departments and others. Obviously we make the effort, but people working in Spanish linguistics just don't want to make that effort. So there is clearly resistance, but it's a very... how should I put it? It's often very irrational, it's not systematic in terms of critical resistance, I think it is more of a reaction against some kind of thing, and certainly it creates a lot of difficulties.

***Just to conclude: in order to publish in English, we often have to pay reviewers or translators. And how can you do it without money? It could be a waste because of the language. We have a good paper, but not in a good enough English...***

Absolutely! And it is a very simple thing, it is really having the academic skills in the language. We have the same problem in Spain. At my university, one thing that I suggested, that they should set up some sort of department to help researchers with their English, but not just simply in terms of translating the paper. There is a service that they have at the university where they have translators, but you have to pay for them. So I thought this should be a sort of community service offered to researchers, also in terms of developing

their academic skills in English, giving them lessons, if you want, in things like presentations, how to make their presentations more effective, and also writing skills. But they just didn't listen to me.

***Don't you think that at the same time we are forcing the importance of English and the importance of one language, and one kind of journals?***

Ok, we somehow create an international language, so as long as we still develop this kind of language, we can communicate even in China. I think that is a positive thing!

***A wider group of people.***

But as long as this language is not controlled by, shall we say, the "natives", as long as we make it a more international English kind of thing.

***Do you think there is any space to new politics in education in this time of crisis?***

It's difficult. Colleagues are basically concerned with the fact of they had cuts in salaries, cuts in jobs and that is the mainstream discourse. But there is nothing in terms of what options we have, what the system is going to do about this. I think people are very concerned with their own problems.

Braga, University of Minho, July 6, 2012

## Interview with Michał Krzyżanowski



BY ANA BRANDÃO

Michał Krzyżanowski works at the University of Örebro in Sweden where he came in 2013 after holding posts at the University of Aberdeen (UK), Lancaster University (UK), University of Vienna (Austria) and Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (Poland). He specialises in Critical Discourse Analysis and has researched extensively on communication in media and the public sphere, communication in national and supranational politics, multilingualism, linguistic and cultural diversity, and racism and social exclusion. He has also worked on developing new discourse-based approaches in qualitative research methodology. Michał is Associate Editor of the *Journal of Language and Politics* and serves on editorial boards of such key journals as, inter alia, *Critical Discourse Studies* or *Qualitative Sociology Review*. He has published widely including in such journals as *Discourse & Society*, *Journalism Studies* or *Critical Discourse Studies*. His recent book publications include, among others, *Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis* (2011) and *The Discursive Construction of European Identities* (2010).

Ana Brandão is a sociologist, Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology and member of the *Social Sciences Research Centre* (CICS), University of Minho, Braga, Portugal.

**Ana Brandão – How has the notion of crisis entered discourses about higher education and research? How has it been used to construct problems and offer putative solutions in the discourses of politicians, research institutions, universities and the European Union regarding social sciences and the humanities? How does the crisis discourse in education and research intertwine with other crisis discourses (cultural, financial, political)?**

**Michał Krzyżanowski** – I think that the first important issue to mention is that crisis is, in a way, always there. We know from quite a lot of research – like, for example, in conceptual history, etc. – that crisis is always, to some extent, a motor, something which is driving



many changes. The question about the current crisis is something entirely different because what we have presently is basically a large discourse about economic crisis, which is now being recontextualized in different social fields. The way we understood or usually knew crisis historically was very often associated with some sort of negative occurrences, which however in a longer perspective had some sort of positive implications. The current crisis, in a way, is slightly different because it is some sort of a general frame, a general excuse for many actions, which have to change different fields and that includes, of course, education and higher education. The current crisis refers to economic crisis. So, this has entered higher education, as far as I can say from my experience, in countries such as Austria, United Kingdom and Poland. In higher education this has much to do with scarcity of resources that appeared in different countries across Europe and then that scarcity of resources had to be framed and legitimised. It takes very different, nationally dependent forms, so it is really difficult, I think, to talk about crisis generally. But generally we can see that in higher education, or the academia as such, which is now internationalised also in the course of a similar crisis, we are seeing some things which I think that some twenty years ago pointed to the commodification of higher education. We are no longer interested in research and in competing on the basis of research as such but we are much more perceiving, or starting to perceive, higher education institutions as companies or as economic entities, which create certain products which then need to be sold. That, of course, changes very much not only the social perception of higher education, but also higher education on the inside because that means that, for example, our relationship with the students changed because they are no longer students, they are often treated as costumers. And, of course, that also changes our overall attitude towards research because we no longer think about research and advancement of research as such but also about the relevance of that research, for example, to the economic aims, be it nationally or internationally. That, I think, is the major thing, although it must be mentioned that that higher education crisis, if you will, had already started before the current economic crisis. For example, economic literature usually mentions 2007/2008 for the start of the economic crisis in Europe whereas the process of economization and commoditization of education was already well under way by then for nearly a decade. Yet, the commodification of higher education allows now for the crisis-related frames to be used as easily and as widely across Europe. So my question is whether it is not just an excuse which is nowadays lenient to something that people already wanted to do.

***You talk about a “general excuse”. Can you elaborate a bit more?***

Well, I can elaborate inasmuch as I can say that, in a way, there is a certain change in higher education and in research that has been happening now for quite a while. I think the reason for that is not the crisis as we know it nowadays, but a wider trend towards a general liberal – or neo-liberal – tendency in social, economic, and political life. Higher education did not escape those tendencies and nowadays, in a way, we can only say that that neo-liberal trend speeded up as a legitimisation frame through which the crisis discourse is implemented.

***So, you think there is a kind of ideological trend towards neo-liberal thought...***

The ideological trend would be good if it was only some sort of ideological way of thinking – ideas or concepts – but here we are dealing with both ideas and actions. And I think our major problem are actions. You notice that a big change is happening across Europe in higher education institutions. The general approach towards what they are, what is their function, what is their social function is actually changing; we might say changing for the worse, unfortunately.

***How is the role of the state in research and education being revised and with what implications? How is the scope of freedom and creative potential of researchers being affected in a context where markets seem to rule?***

There is a question of whether the increased or decreased presence of the state within higher education is positive or negative. I think that what we have generally witnessed some sort of a gradual withdrawal of the state from higher education, especially in terms of state funding for institutions, and some sort of a drive for the institutions to rely much more on their own resources, to mobilize resources. And that means a very significant change because as much as state funding could have been also a problematic issue in terms of giving particular guidelines to research, to fostering or promoting certain areas of research and so on and so forth, that also meant that, at least, research was being made relevant to the surrounding society. Nowadays, what we have is institutions seeking their own ways of making profits. Making profits was not at all a function of higher education in the past. So, of course, once the state withdraws funding to support higher education as such, then institutions have to seek their own ways of finding resources and that can very often take negative – but sometimes positive – forms. Of course, the world is never perfect and even at the times when most of higher education was state funded that was never ideal. I think the withdrawal of the presence of the state in terms of public funding is problematic because we are bound to find new ways of economizing in universities and education and that is a general problem or a general challenge. The departure from state funding also causes problems in academia regarding the general advancement of the level of research and teaching. It is assessed in a quasi-economical way. Teaching is assessed by student satisfaction, which very much resembles customer satisfaction with any other services. And then with research, with many areas of research which cannot be immediately sold as relevant – for example in humanities and social sciences – that is being viewed as obsolete or basically unnecessary. And that is of course a huge danger because within humanities and social sciences for example there are many research areas of primary importance to society and to individuals. So I think the general trend we are talking about is negative, of course, from my perspective, at least, as somebody who works at the intersections of humanities and social sciences.

***But if you think not only about humanities and social sciences, but also about natural sciences and engineering, researchers sometimes feel that this focus on applied research that can be sold in the market, which is important to universities and allows them to have some funds, in the long run, also hits the very foundation of applied science as the fundamental science that supports it is not immediately profitable or usable either...***

Absolutely. I have always been interested in the application of my research, but then I operate in a particular research area. I have always been working in an engaged kind of analysis. But the question is different. The question is that this is a very simple way to classify some areas as “useful”, others as “not useful”; those areas we can “sell”, “those we cannot”, etc, that kind of talk. Because even applied science draws extensively on foundational, background research, which happens in areas like social theory, political sociology, theoretical sociology, and so on. So, if those areas would not be promoted that would eventually lead to applied research also running out of foundational ideas. So, it is not as simple as it seems to some people who say “this is useful, that is not useful”. Now, when we believe in interdisciplinarity, when we do finally practice – or at least try to practice – interdisciplinarity, and if we even want to go further towards trans- or post-interdisciplinarity seriously – then we have to recognize very clearly the importance of foundational research, especially for humanities and social sciences, in our case.

***Who drives research policies? The Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology mentions Germany as a model and claims that it can help the Portuguese scientific community to be successful in European calls by promoting a “greater alignment with the European programmes”. Do you think core countries are actually setting standards, research areas and priorities, and how can this impact on other countries, namely in our areas (social sciences and humanities) since they are so very context-specific?***

Well, there has been some sort of a general trend for the academia, if you speak of the European example, to move towards the Anglo-Saxon model very much. One thing that we are missing, however, especially in the context of the British model, is that universities have always – despite a large proportion of state funding – had some sort of own economic initiative there, not to mention that studying at British Universities was always associated with lower or higher tuition fees. So, the Anglo-Saxon model has always had this drive, this economic element, but now we are seeing the same model being popularized and implemented across Europe. There are positive elements of that, of course, but the dangers are those we have spoken of before, of automatically spreading out the model to universities, and as long as universities can cope with that, as long as universities have enough of a balance – say, they are strong on social sciences, but also on natural sciences –, they can reach profit and profit making. But then there are universities which rely heavily on social sciences and humanities and they will not be able to defend themselves in the situation that we are now witnessing. So, there is a problem of finding the right balance, if you will. In your question, you mentioned Germany being presented as some sort of an important example for Portugal. I am not sure about this, and I do not know what was actually presented in the Portuguese context, but what I can say, what can be used perhaps as an argument in favour of using Germany and Britain as examples is that these are huge research communities, they are countries with very well established traditions of national funding in certain areas and of funding which transcends national borders. For instance, in Germany there is the Volkswagen Stiftung, which very often funds research in a larger German-speaking area – not just Germany, but also Austria, etc. But, what is important and what we should

not forget is that those countries which are now being presented as an example, first of all, have a huge academic landscape; they are countries with many universities – Germany has several dozens of universities, not to mention the UK. I think that as much as those models can be working in those particular national contexts, transposing them onto smaller countries – say, for example, Portugal, whose size can be compared perhaps to Austria – is not that easy simply because the academic community is much different in those countries and it is not guided as much as elsewhere by principles of academic competition. There are also problems because the real issue nowadays, and that is also important in the context of the crisis, is how sustainable the models which are presented to us actually are. Because we know that the German national and regional governments have this “Excellence Initiative” (Exzellenzinitiative) – currently in its second five-year round – where universities basically apply for some sort of “excellence status” which means additional money and additional state funding for a period of a few years. But, on the other hand, what is going to happen to that funding in a few years? We have universities which, for example, were in the first excellence initiative – but some of them lost this status, some of them gained or retained this status – but generally it means an additional influx of money, which, however, to my mind, cannot be used that very efficiently in a long term. It is very much of a project-ran money and the “big money” is a money which has to be spent within a few years period and universities cannot use it for their long-term development, for a long term establishment of, say, disciplinary or interdisciplinary research centres or institutes. So, I think the world is not as simple as some people think. Looking at how research is organised, how research funding is organized, it is very much nation-specific and that always has to be taken into consideration.

***There is another dimension of this problem, which has to do with the research agenda, because it is not just the model – how you manage research centres. In order to be successful in European calls, first, of course, you need to enter the networks, and you also need to follow priorities in terms of research areas and problems, and these are not necessarily the ones that you feel are the most important at a specific moment...***

But that is how it works, unfortunately, these days. I myself have experience in quite a few European-funded projects, which I very much appreciate because, of course, they give you a lot of international exchange in interdisciplinary research, in particular, and that is, I think, truly important. The problem being, however, that we very often have very good research ideas but then we check for current calls to cover those ideas. And if the calls and our ideas do not match, then of course we have to pursue our interests individually, which is very much a problem because we have teaching and administrative obligations, as well as academic ones. Of course, we know that there are consultations running on how to select topics, but I think that what we can observe now, especially in the humanities and social sciences, is a situation where relevant calls happen very rarely. So we have, say, one good call, one that would potentially give money to our current interests and our pressing research needs, but then for a few years there is nothing. And then when we have a situation like that with really relevant calls happening only once in a while, of course, competition increases very quickly and it is very difficult to get funded. Another issue is how we can deal

with projects when we get them because my experiences from different countries are very different. I think that of huge importance here is how much our institutions can support us in conducting research, not really from an academic perspective where we are usually fine, but actually in administering research, for example, how much support do we get so that we can really care about academic research rather than care about the administrative, financial and legal aspects of the projects. What happens in quite a few countries is that actually somebody who is the project leader has to deal with all those issues and then, of course, you do not have enough time to devote yourself to research even if you do get the funding for that research. So, that is also a huge danger, yes. So, it is definitely a huge challenge and if I knew the answer to solve all those problems I would be a rich man, but unfortunately I do not know that.

***Considering this general trend towards a certain model of doing science and also the pressure to internationalize our work in this environment of strong competition and so on, I would like to know a little bit about the specific case of your country. What is happening in your country?***

Well, first of all, I do not consider the way the internationalization of research now works – very monolingually – to be very negative, and I am sure I should not say that as a person who has worked on multilingualism. If I was to tell you from my own personal experience, I took part of my education when Poland was still a communist country and it was only due to the fact that research became internationalized and that we became English-speaking that one could get out of the national milieu and the strictly national – and often parochial – way of doing research. But we still have to remember that the EU is not equal throughout and there are still many countries that still need internationalization, that still need to counteract the local tendencies. So, I do consider this, to a large extent, a positive development. Of course, there are dangers in what we have spoken of. In my particular country, there is something that was initiated one or two years ago, a sort of a national council for research in humanities, which is supposed to enhance exactly this hugely disregarded foundational research in humanities and social sciences. There is a positive trend, but we always have to be careful and that comes back to the question about the state that you asked before, inasmuch as now research validity would be assessed not because of its academic but in fact national relevance. And here we could very easily fall into some strange, not to say nationalistic, trap which should never have its place in research. So, this is always a problem. But in any case Poland is now, at least trying to, in a way, advance humanities. We do not know what the results will be. I think that the first big call is now under review, so we will see the results and then we will know where this is actually going depending on the sort of projects that will eventually get funded and promoted. The problem with such initiatives is that, in a way, this becomes autopoietic, to speak in Niklas Luhmann's terms, because you can end up self-reproducing a sort of a "national research culture", which might actually fallout to meet some sort of international air and also it may fail to notice necessity to change or to improve because in international programmes you have the international peer reviewing, which, in a way, displaces the research and is hopefully – hopefully because that does not always happen – able to make it internationally valid. If we fall into this

national trap where you have national programmes, national reviewers, we may end up self-reproducing some mistakes, which weaken the research as well as its relevance for society – which nowadays is not anymore closed within the national borders. So, there are advantages and disadvantages and we are yet to see where all this is going.

***You were talking about the centrality of the Anglo-Saxon model, and also language, because the journals that we aim to publish in are largely English-language journals. I was recently at an international conference and there was this Irish researcher who complained about the fact that the only language she knew was English and so she had this problem because her country is much more similar to southern European countries, but she cannot speak any of their languages. So, to what extent can this impact on Anglo-Saxon countries also in terms of the diversity of research and so on?***

Well, there are a few questions in there, actually. I have been working on monolingualism and multilingualism for a few years, so I think there are no easy solutions to any of the problems we are talking about. As long as we are speaking about some sort of a functional monolingualism, which I think is there nowadays in academia, that does not necessarily have to be wrong because what we see now in conferences like this one is that for people from very different countries, very different disciplines, very different traditions, English is the medium which enables us all to meet and talk – and I am not in favour of English hegemony or anything like that, but there is simply a functional aspect to that. This is a different academia than the one we would have had some forty years ago. So, there is a positive side to that. The negative thing is when monolingualism becomes a cultural issue and when it starts to be used as an excuse for local national policies and eventually has an impact on societies losing languages for different reasons – for example, if we look at many countries where we have now monolingual language policies with regard to minorities and migrant groups. That is definitely another thing. If we are talking about academia, I think English allows us to communicate. Of course, we can always ask a very, very old question: “why should it be English, why is it not French”? But my experiences here are rather strange. I have been working in a project about multilingualism where we also tried to work multilingually and my experience is, to some extent, that claims for multilingualism are very often voiced by people who would like to promote their own language. So, in a way, the usual calls for multilingualism – for example, in academic conferences – come from French speakers who prefer to speak French than English, or by German speakers who would perhaps like to do the same, and not really from people like your Irish speaker you just mentioned. And my position is that we should find a common denominator in terms of a language that we can all express ourselves in, rather than ask why it is English, why it is French or whatever. Of course, there is a huge economic dimension to that because the publishing business is nowadays working in English and I think there is no reverse to that. And again, if you would ask for my personal experience, English was a key element to why I could work internationally. It is really difficult to deny that. I understand the cultural implications of monolingualism, but I think that, in terms of the academia, we still have to consider the functional issue and I would still say that this nowadays is still, to a large extent, a positive development just



because we are all able to speak, we are all able to exchange, because this enables networking, collaborations and interdisciplinarity. Imagine, for example, the internationally funded projects if there was not a common language we could use...

***Despite the fact that, as you said, these transformations in your country are still going on, what are your feelings concerning their impacts on the diversity and quality of the research that is being conducted nowadays?***

This is a very difficult question because I think it will have to be assessed depending on different areas, different issues, different disciplines, from which perspectives things are being researched. So, it is not really easy to respond to that. I think that the fact that the international academia is English-speaking very much acts to the advantage of the Anglo-Saxon academia – and to America, especially. On the other hand, if we look at the Anglo-Saxon academia – be it Britain, or be it America – it is rather advanced, with a very diverse research and a lot of ideas and theories or methodologies that we can draw from. In the European context, for example, British academia is such a huge area in terms of the number of universities and of different types of research being conducted. Of course, there is also the personal side of this because each of us here – and many people in the academia – are not native speakers of English and we always have the disadvantage of competing with other countries where English is the first language. But, again, that is something that we cannot do much about.

***You were saying that this trend towards internationalization is somehow helping to enhance the quality of research in your country...***

Yes, yes, definitely. In my country, I think that internationalization very much helps to come out of several of what Bourdieu called “deep seated dispositions” of research which in Poland have always been a huge problem in the academia. But fortunately, there is now some sort of a gradual and slow – through often not without obstacles – establishment of a new approach towards research and its function in society. So, in this particular case, I would consider this as positive. There are so many dimensions to that that we could talk about it for weeks, but particularly in the Polish case, I think this is important. But, then again, the question is that of abilities and how much the academia can actually make itself able to follow international trends. I think in Poland we are still looking ahead to much more internationalization, but fortunately the younger generation does not have that problem of languages which was very often an obstacle for many excellent colleagues – for example in Polish social sciences – becoming internationally prominent. Fortunately, since 1989 we have been quite consequent in teaching English and many other foreign languages and I think that we can see results of that in the Polish academia already.

***Going back to the “crisis discourse”, are there any examples of resistance to this type of discourse that you can point out?***

I think that what we need here is some sort of explanation because as much as I believe in the human individual and collective agency, we also have to be aware of the reality we live in. We cannot do wishful thinking. We have to be very realistic about how

much we can do and how much we can change. And we have to find ways for finding space for academic freedom, for academic advancement within the existing international context because we simply will not be able to change the international setting. Maybe when the academia was much more national, twenty or thirty years ago, that might have still been possible. Now, we are dealing with tendencies, which we cannot reverse. There have been international developments – such as, for example, the Bologna Strategy ten or so years ago – which we now cannot do much about. So, I am not sure, but, again, this is my recent Polish experience. In the Polish situation, whenever there was big resistance and big revolutions, there were winners and losers, and in the long run that always means that resisting something can mean gains for some, but losses for others and this is not what we should do, actually, because we should not take resistant forms that could produce and create new inequalities. We should rather eradicate already existing ones and create equality. So, in a way, I am very strange in my position here and less radical because I think it does not make sense, just because reality leads us to find a place therein and find a way of putting through our ideas and listening to others' rather than taking radical steps.

***Can you think of any alternative forms of governance regarding education and research that can be enacted?***

I think the alternative forms are to large extent the previous forms, actually. In the British academia we still have those elements of institutions, unfortunately not in the position that they used to be, which remind us of one of the basic academic principles, that is of self-governance. On the other hand, we also have to understand that the current situation in universities has in a way forced them to take this market-driven position and that also means that universities have to now have some sort of managers. But I am still very much against, e.g. in case of the British academia, to have managers replacing academics in leading positions. On the other hand, not all academics have big managerial skills. So, of course, we also have a double-bind here, and it is not really easy to find a positive solution to that.

***Somewhere in between...***

Somewhere in between, but I do not know where it is. I am very much in favour of academic self-governance, but I am also in favour of a drive towards taking much more responsibility. We also have to be realistic. There are times when we are required to be much more down the administrative runway, to not only produce international journals, to write publications, but to get those projects, to administer those projects, and there is simply not as much time left for academic self-government as we would like. Back in the times when we were conducting research and teaching as an element of overall advancement, that also meant that we still had the time to think about the milieu we were in and we had time for self-governance, for taking up some administrative tasks without much detriment to our research and teaching. Now, we simply do not have the time. That we cannot change and that opens up very quickly to some sort of managerial governance in universities. That is not good, but I think there is very little we can do about it.

***Taking into consideration all the matters you focused on, but looking at the students' side, what do you think are the positive and negative impacts of all these changes?***

I think this is a very difficult question because the expectations and the needs of the students in academia have changed so much. And this is also because we have moved from a very wealthy Europe to a Europe of scarcity of resources and with a lot of inequalities. And to me it is not really surprising that all students ask about when they want to study is their employability after finishing the university. How much will these studies eventually help me to get a job, sustain my family and my children, and so on? So, students now demand we teach stuff that is applicable and has relevance and I think that is a challenge for us because we still have to, as much as possible, also try and teach them about general, foundational ideas, but also about how they relate to everyday practice, to social practice, to economic practice. Maybe twenty, thirty, forty years ago we could have been producing many people in foundational areas, but nowadays it seems we just cannot afford it. The other thing is that in many countries we already have a lot of established systems of doing two subjects, or two streams, majors and minors combined, and that, I think, is an extremely good idea. For example, the Polish example is very traditional and that is very dramatic. I studied in Germany at the end of the nineties and there was already a very well established system back then because it is a system that gives you opportunities in different areas and even if there is one foundational area, the other one would be more applied and you create a person that is a much more different individual, much more flexible in terms of professional chances. So, I think that already changed very much, but we have to fully understand what the students want and expect from us because it is just a different world we are living in, it is a world with scarcity of resources, it is a world of unemployment and I understand that those are economic, social functions that we need to respond to as far as students' expectations. We should not, on the other hand, over-economize; we should not overestimate the economic, but I think it is pretty understandable that people want to ask questions – “ok, I am going to study, but what am I going to do with it, what do I get from that?” That, of course, can take much more extreme forms in a context such as this because nowadays in many countries, say the UK, we have to pay quite a lot for your university education and then one asks the question “why should I start my professional activity with that huge debt on my shoulders?” and “would that education give me the ability to pay it, as well?” It is maybe easier in other countries, but I think it is exactly the same question. So, I fully understand students' expectations and that we should not be blaming students. We should be more flexible. Of course, the problem is that this comes at a time when we academics are required to do much, much more and when we have less and less time to think of teaching or research strategies that would fit much better the students' expectations. This is very often not exactly about the contents of what the students expect, but also about the forms of teaching and transferring knowledge that students expect us to use. I once met by accident a person who turned out to be a student at the university where I worked before and he told me that maybe what he received in terms of contents was not eventually relevant to his future work. He said that, for example, the fact that he was studying while conducting different projects and taking part in project work eventually increased very much his professional chances because, as we

know, contemporary business is very much project-based. So maybe, after all, we should not focus – as we used to – as much on improving contents but also on the forms of knowledge transfer and on which actual skills students thus acquire. And that, of course, also means, for us, the necessity to evaluate the work that we do regularly, to be self-reflexive as far as our teaching, and the necessity to change and improve things if need be.

***Is there something else you want to add to this conversation?***

No, let's hope things will get better although they do not look good these days. But I would not be too negative after all. There are, as I mentioned, some positive aspects of all that is happening and let's hope this crisis will also teach us something. I always have this "Catholic approach" to it: that we should first of all always start correcting mistakes from ourselves. It is not just the system; it is not just the students, it is also us and our ability to change. Let us start thinking about how the academia is and the way it should be in contemporary societies and how it should look in the future. This is not the system we had back in 1968, or sometime around that. The world is so much different! The Europe we lived in was much wealthier, as we know, and often eating out the resources of future generations, and that's scarcity we now have to deal with. So, I think this requires a lot of flexibility. I would be positive about the future, but, first of all, let us be honest with ourselves and let us see what we as academics, what we as scholars have to do to be much more responsible vis-à-vis the students, vis-à-vis society and vis-à-vis the future generations.

Braga, University of Minho, July 6, 2012

## Interview with Moisés de Lemos Martins



Moisés de Lemos Martins is Full Professor at the Department of Communication Sciences of the University of Minho (UM). He is director of the *Communication and Society Research Centre* (CECS), which he founded in 2001, and editor of the journals *Comunicação e Sociedade* and *Revista Lusófona de Estudos Culturais*. He is president of SOPCOM – *Associação Portuguesa de Ciências da Comunicação*, since 2005; Lusocom – *Federação Lusófona de Ciências da Comunicação*, since 2011, and Confibercom – *Confederação Ibero-Americana das Associações Científicas e Académicas*. Among other books, he published *Crise no Castelo da Cultura – Das Estrelas para os Ecrãs* (Coimbra, Grácio Editor, 2011, and São Paulo, Annablume), *A Linguagem, a Verdade e o Poder. Ensaio de Semiótica Social* (Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian & Foundation for Science and Technology, 2002), *Para uma Inversa Navegação. O Discurso da Identidade* (Porto, Afrontamento, 1996). He edited, among others, the book *Comunicação e Lusofonia. Para uma análise crítica da cultura e dos media* (Porto, Campo das Letras, 2006). For more information, please see <http://www.eracareers.pt/opportunities/index.aspx?task=showMember&jobID=33263&juriID=7394&lang=en&idc=4>.

### ***How has the notion of crisis entered discourses about higher education and research?***

When I talk about crisis, I am referring to the crisis of the human, a contemporary *mal de vivre*, which is associated with the experience of technology, from network communication to biotechnology, and with the conversion of our lives to the logic of the global marketplace. My point of view is inscribed in a theory of culture that interprets communication as the generalised form of culture. I have expounded this view in *Crise no Castelo da Cultura* [*Crisis in the Castle of Culture*] (Coimbra and São Paulo, 2011), a volume that put together studies in communication carried out over a decade.

Following from what we may term the “thinking of difference” – from Nietzsche to Foucault and Lyotard, and from Derrida to Deleuze and Baudrillard – my point of view questions the precarious condition of those who wander through a “night of time” where history is stored in gigabytes, emotions are processed in bytes, bodies are composed of pixels, and the whole of life (material goods, bodies and souls) is converted into economic and financial value. Our daily lives may well be stuck in the mud of boredom, for the screens do not leave us alone, they agitate us, excite us and inevitably mobilise us towards the global marketplace, in a movement in which the word recedes before the torrent of technological images, and we lose our secure ground, a stable identity, any known and controllable territory.

The “clandestine king” of our times, to use Simmel’s expression, are, in fact, the technologies of information. They connect individuals globally and create, in them, the brain that they need: (1) that of mobile individuals, that is, of individuals that assume a nomadic, precarious condition devoid of social rights; (2) individuals that are ready for mobilization, i.e., ready to do any job, permanently responding to the demands of the market; (3) that of competitive individuals, with a keen sense of the logic of production; (4) and that of performers, that is, doers, accomplishers.

Mobile, ready to be mobilised, competitive and performers, that is, apt to work for the market, and also for the database, the ranking and the statistics, i.e., whatever the theodicy of the market designates as “quality” and “excellence”. Information technologies can program us that way, they can give us that brain, they which have constituted themselves, among us, as a space of control.

Traditional metaphysics was founded on the word, a space of promise. And the promise entailed a future and offered guarantees for it. That metaphysics of unity has finished in the West: we no longer launch a purpose forward (into the future), basing it on a lost origin. It is to the present that we are now mobilised. The words of the promise (centred on the future) have been replaced with the numbers of the promise (which, generally speaking, in the West are mostly the numbers of the crisis): those of the Gross National Product (GNP) that do not grow, or grow negatively; those of the Balance of Trade with chronic unbalances between exports and imports; those of the deficit, internal and external; those of unemployment; those of the aged population; those of social inequalities, which are spreading; those of the dramatic fall in demographic rates... These are numbers of the present which, in the West, spell its crisis. Priests, lawyers and politicians no longer organise life in the West, because the crisis has obscured the present so that the horizon has become invisible; the promise is now held by economists, engineers and managers. They are our magicians – the magicians of the present time.

It is in this context of technologic mobilization towards the global marketplace, with cultures in decay and through landscapes of ruins, that we witness the discourses of crisis being extended to higher education and research. We can see that, for example, through the application of marketing ideas to the educational system. Today, at universities, the notion that we should only offer products that are likely to be purchased is widespread. As soon as teaching is converted into commerce, instructors, now recycled into clerks and consultants, become dependent upon the choices and decisions of commercial directors, i.e., the heads of schools and faculties, who centralise the direction of such commerce. The assessment of



the product, its “profile”, is determined from the top down, according to bureaucratic criteria, dependent upon the laws of the market, of commerce and of marketing, and of their media visibility. As a consequence, the teaching projects that are considered more “fragile”, those aimed at a restricted number of consumers, are mercilessly eliminated.

And the same happens with the great majority of fundamental research projects, projects that do not answer exclusively to practical social needs nor reflect solely the indecorous conviction that we are entitled to everything and that everything has a price. Furthermore, publishers do not even want to hear about publishing fundamental research, for fear of having no readers. And the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT – Portugal’s Science and Technology Foundation) is equally hostile to it, in the name of a civil society that would struggle to understand the funding of something that has no social utility.

I believe universities have, for a long time now, been catering for average students. And that strategic option is analogous with the idea of equally average professors. That may be the source of the systematic campaign of devaluation of thinking at higher education institutions. The idea of an index of productivity and the permanent call of the pedagogic process, shaped into e-platforms, bureaucratises and infantilises professors. Both ideas translate a dull concept of “excellence” and “quality”. Both are devoid of grandeur: they possess no ethical exigency, nor do they possess the face and the reasoning of professors and students. What is stimulated there are average sensibilities, which remain connected to conservative values, be they ethic, narrative, pedagogic or scientific, and which repeat thoughtless operative mechanisms to exhaustion.

Conceived for average students and professors, in the classroom, higher education becomes melancholic: with no gravitas, no concern for the state we have arrived in; the impossibility to intervene in the course of events becomes more accentuated; and thought struggles to survive.

A class, these days, is no longer an exercise in looking. Nothing is likely to encourage a calm look, nothing is likely to move one into dancing. A class, today, must have a regular beat, like narrative hiccups, with successive gusts of transparencies and slides. Or it can work like an automatic watering system, the voice of the professor dubbed in the background by images in a PowerPoint presentation. In the classroom, a commercial style has become generalised, either as a commercial ad or as a promotion film. In both cases the aim is the same: the search for immediate communication and the search for meaning at a fast speed. Classes cannot, in fact, compare badly with the rhythm of advertising communication. It could be said that encouraging a calm look, and moving one’s thinking into a dancing rhythm, would make for a slow boring class for which no one has patience.

Thought sinks, and with it the very academic ideal sinks. That is, universities sink by way of melancholic blows. It is vital to combat melancholy – that aesthetic mermaid whose desires are fulfilled with operative mobilisation, with no thought nor social or political engagement – with the ethic criterion of critical unrest. I believe universities should be seen as places of unbounded freedom, as places of a democracy to come. Above all, universities embody a principle of critical resistance and a potential for dissidence, guided by what Jacques Derrida called “a thinking of justice”. I believe that is the mission of universities. It is their ultimate job to safeguard the possibilities of the adventure of thought, and to

transform both teaching and research into an idea without which the present is a pure form from which all potential has disappeared.

***How has it been used to construct problems and offer putative solutions in the discourses of politicians, research institutions, universities and the European Union regarding the Social Sciences and the Humanities?***

Our time has accelerated mostly with the explosion of technology, and we have been alienated from our historical condition. At all levels of the human condition, the objective is now the marketplace. For that reason, what is happening to us, through the current policies for teaching and researching, is technological control and an accelerated mobilization towards the marketplace, which is also affecting the Social and the Human Sciences.

In this context, I would like to call to mind a text by Heidegger about technique, written in 1954. Thinking about the nature of technique, Heidegger recalls the Aristotelian tradition to point out that technique entails a “causa materialis”, a “causa formalis”, a “causa finalis” and a “causa efficiens”. He uses as an example the making of a chalice, which entails a material, for example, silver – “causa materialis”; a shape, for example that of a goblet – “causa formalis”; a purpose, for example, religious – “causa finalis”; and a craftsman, who produces the effect by making the chalice – “causa efficiens”. It is the case, however, that in the era of technique (a modernity of “means without ends”, as Agamben warns), the “causa finalis” disappears, it ceases to be a causality, and the “causa efficiens” changes nature. The focus is not on the craftsman any more, as Heidegger notes, but on “efficacy and the efficiency of making”, that is, the social utility of the production process. It can then be said that the “causa efficiens” requires operativity and efficacy; the “causa efficiens” is no longer the craftsman, but a product of the market, a commodity.

When transposed to the higher education system, Heidegger’s reading means that the citizen, learned and instructed in an area of knowledge, becomes the chalice. In that case, the students are the material (“causa materialis”); the course, be it graduate, masters or doctorate, is the shape (“causa formalis”); an informed, critical, participative and community-minded citizen is the religious system (“causa finalis”); and the professor is the craftsman, who “makes” the graduate, master or doctor (“causa efficiens”). However, with technological mobilisation and the demands of the market, the “causa efficiens” no longer contemplates professors, and students are but goods. Both are technologically mobilised towards the market, and in the process, become disarticulated as citizens and stranded in their corporation or tribe, which have replaced the community. It is demanded from them that they move from country to country and from university to university. They must be competitive and entrepreneurial, promote self-employment or employment in general, for instance through spin-offs. And they must be performers. In the meantime, the crowd of doctoral and post-doctoral students grows, young people with no other academic alternative but the redemptive search for a research scholarship which will allow them to wander from conference to conference, from journal to journal, from research project to research project, chasing after a top place in some ranking. And the same is to be expected from their defunct professors.

As I see it, we are facing a “crisis of experience”, a diagnosis made in the 1930s by Walter Benjamin, and more recently by Giorgio Agamben. Nowadays we live in a numb state, and our “commitment with the epoch and the ideas behind it” is increasingly smaller, as Walter Benjamin emphasised. We are alienated from our historic condition and hopelessly muddling through a quotidian turned into its noisy media rendition. Our times, however, appear to be happy ones; times that take comfort in the bosom of technology, the media and shopping centres; a bosom that provides tranquil trips and risk-free adventures, a fantastic aesthetic experience into the kingdom of commodities, a kingdom of consumption, evasion and exoticism.

If we are to believe Paul Celan, time requires several accents: acute for actuality, grave for historicity and circumflex for eternity – the circumflex accent being a sign of expansion. It is my conviction, however, that time has lost all its accents. Historicity, the grave accent of time, the accent of our responsibility for our state and the state of the world, is today a “disease”. Actuality, the acute accent of time, has been transformed by the media into *fait-divers*. And eternity, the circumflex accent that expands time, is just a fragment in the torrent in which, downstream, all the names that spoke of an absolute presence (of a fundamental principle) go: essence, substance, subject, conscience, existence, God, human, transcendence, as Jacques Derrida pointed out.

I believe this is the “malady” of our time, a time when accents are missing, a time unfinished by a horizon of redemption. And universities also suffer from that malady. With the market – the financial market and the job market – thundering fantastically above their heads, universities tumble down to the *plateau* of news, without ever creating hope. The news today at universities is commercial ideology: universities are companies; education is a service; teaching and research are business opportunities; professors are clerks or consultants; students are clients. And all that is given us to chew on, like a symbolic chewing gum or a smuggled lolly, is the promise of an unlikely social success: the news becomes the excellence of courses and professors, measured with a handful of indicators of a production marks sheet, but thoughtless; news is the rates of demand for a particular institution and the entry marks for a course; news is the rates of success and employability of former students. I would say, along with Alexandre O’Neill’s caustic verses, that news is the scurrying of news: “News is devouring! There it goes down the gut that will swallow every and all! There it goes, there it went! Not even the work of entrails holds news... Heartless news!”

It is doubtless the scurrying of news, and it is also the recitation of the same tale. But as we know, every mythical narrative is melancholic, it only takes flight where reality is absent or cracked. As Giorgio Agamben well observed, this is a time of “means without ends”. And because it is a time of means without ends, nothing is more natural than that universities also live hopelessly, in permanent suffering for a finality, with the social and human sciences unable to escape technological control or the mobilisation towards the market.

I would like to mention, in this context, the present debate around the Portuguese language, which at times, approaches a hallucinated messianic narrative. In an interview given to the website *Inteligência Económica (Economic Intelligence)*, on the occasion of the launch of *Potencial Económico da Língua Portuguesa (The Economic Potential of the Portuguese*

*Language*), Luís Reto, the Dean of ISCTE-IUL, who coordinated the study, does not hide his enthusiasm: “This is the time of the Portuguese language” (<http://inteligenciaeconomica.com.pt>). And immediately positioning the Portuguese language in the route of economy, he warns that navigation will, from now on, be towards a new cultural archive in which the language is a “product” and has “economic value”, and its importance is evaluated in terms of a percentage in the GNP. Thrown in the sea of its own transformation “into an economic world power”, the destiny of the Portuguese language is, on the one hand, “the Lusophone community”, and on the other, “the value created outwards, towards a networked economy”.

***How does the crisis discourse in education and research intertwine with other crisis discourses (cultural, financial, political)?***

It was the spirit of modernity, based on the principles of historicity and eschatology, which led the idea of historical time and became a reason for hope. As I see it, when we talk about information technologies, that idea of historical time still echoes, standing as the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, and in the Tower of Babel as the universal communication of that knowledge.

The university imaginary was a modern imaginary since its medieval origin, by dreaming of the universalisation of knowledge, as well as the universalisation of the scientific community. The figures that, from the start, have mobilised the university are the figures of emancipation and mastery of history. By dreaming of the universalisation of knowledge, and the universalisation of its transmission, the university presents itself, from its beginning, as a eschatological form, a utopian and hopeful form of facing time.

The dream that the university embodied in the 13<sup>th</sup> century presupposed that people’s lives were organised into a meaningful history, fulfilling the promise of the absolute relation that had been dreamt in immemorial time. In that time of cathedrals with long stone needles aiming for the skies, culture was all the truth of the university. But who demands culture from teaching and from research today? What is asked of them is “quality”, and all quality has to be of use. Teaching and science that are not useful seem to be forever doomed. From an ethical point of view, it is doubtless a significant change.

In our information society, the university acts more and more like any other media. For the press there was also a time when the veracity of the news was all its value. Today, however, the chief editor or the director of a newspaper does not require that information be true. What s/he wants is for it to be exciting. If it is not exciting, it is not useful. And if it is not useful, there is no point in publishing it.

We live in a time when only that which is effective seems to be socially justifiable; that which is instrumental, which, in a few words, serves the designs of pragmatic reason. Today everybody suffers from this generalised conviction that we are entitled to everything: to respect, to self-expression, to a diploma, to a job, to social success. And it is the school, and more particularly the university, that must fight this battle and make sure this dream comes true: a promise of success, which is synonym with winning every time.

To control its market behaviour and its efficacy, higher education decided to dive into convoluted processes of self-assessment, internal and external. It insistently asks courses

what happened to their graduates. It forces professors, in an organised and systematic way, to deal with an endless number of academic roadblocks justified by “pedagogic supervision” and “quality”. It imposes a rate of scientific production on researchers, and it plans to align them into a ranking of academic irradiance measured by the “impact factors” of citations of their work and the journals they publish in. It asks of students that they control their professors’ performance, in case their interest in “quality” wanes in favour of critical and scientific activities.

By serving the market as the only master and obeying the demands of competitiveness, as if liberal reason were the rightful tribunal where academic excellence is judged, the university ended up by losing its centre and began working according to lines of thinking that are not its own, in a continuously schizophrenic state.

Students no longer fail, the university does. The university has decided to deny itself. It denies itself by organising regular consultations with students to register their opinions about their professors and the courses’ syllabi. It denies itself, when all it wants to do is communicate, listen, when it wants pedagogy and supervision, and neglects its obligation to teach.

It is a fact that the university does not sufficiently promote the desired social mobility, and in this sense, its contribution to the democratisation of the country is limited – in fact, what our politicians do today is advise young people to leave the country, to emigrate.

It is also a fact that the scientific discourse is now one among many, and can no longer stand as the court of reason. In fact, the hegemonic liberal ideology has done everything it can to discredit any pedagogic and scientific discourse that is not subsumed by the necessities of economic development and of creating jobs.

It is also true that higher education seems incapable of responding to the increasing pressure of social demands: the need for economic development, the need to create jobs, to modernise the country, the need for technological innovation, international competitiveness, the need to promote social cohesion by fighting ethnic and gender asymmetries and encouraging the inclusion of minorities, the need to fight media and digital illiteracy.

In a time that is distant from the immaterial, a time of want, “without rock, cape or quay” (Sophia de Mello Breyner), the university is no longer that other language that destroys appearances and enlightens us. In a landscape of ruins, where gods and humans have lost their splendour, the university is less and less an exercise in memory and a reservoir of care. The university finds it difficult to stand for dreams and openness to the world.

Having lost its centrality, the university has suffered increased social pressure. And, stunned, it accepts that students stop being students (with the obligation to learn) and become worshiped as “youth”; stunned, it accepts that culture and research surrender to the cult of technology and the future per se; stunned, it mobilises itself towards an erroneous idea of success.

This means that teaching drowns in institutional bureaucracy, in a process called “quality control procedure”, something amorphous, with no real “body”, without the time of the “other”, with no ethical requirement; this also means that research lays in the market

and in competition all hope for redemption, and succumbs to commercial ideology; this also means that the service it does to the community is often pragmatic, a compulsion towards business, an indecorous rush, which in turn feeds the generalised conviction that we are entitled to everything and that everything has a price.

And however, as I see it, the university cannot give in to the idea that academic policies are restricted to management strategies, and that the demands for growth are settled with responses of an exclusively technical and instrumental nature. For the task of the university is to learn and teach how to look, but also to learn and teach how to think. To learn and teach how to look means to get the eye used to calmness, to patience, allow things to approach us; learn how to reserve judgement, how to surround and take on the particular case from every angle, as Nietzsche has taught us. And to learn and teach how to think means, to continue to use Nietzsche's words, to learn and to teach a technique, a plan of study, a will to master something – for thinking should be learned like dancing is learned, like a type of dance...

***How is the role of the state in research and education being revised and with what implications? How is the scope of freedom and creative potential of researchers being affected in a context where markets seem to rule?***

Let us focus on the university. Over the last decade, we've been witnessing, in Portuguese public universities, the implementation and adherence to corrective and orthopaedic procedures, which certify, in teaching and in research, routine and conformity, efficiency and utility, and which section the academic quotidian and surround it in a dourness that freezes the slightest hint of life and imagination with positive and administrative knowledge. On the other hand, in the governing of universities, "managerial and economic" models triumph over "classic collegial models", as Teresa Ruão concluded in her doctoral thesis in Media Studies at the University of Minho, which she finished in 2008. Also, still according to Teresa Ruão, as the university followed "models of management close to those of the private sector", its identity acquired "a more instrumental format" and communication became increasingly "controlled to produce strategic results". To control communication in order to produce strategic results is, these days, the job of the Press Offices of universities, also known as Communication and Image Offices, which are instruments to administer, in the public sphere, the policies of the institutions of higher education. From this point of view, communication, and more specifically, persuasive communication, is not, in any way, a modest activity of thought, erected to repair cultural catastrophes. It is, on the contrary, a fortress, reason armed with bayonets, and a bear hug, which frustrates any ideas that may still prevail about the innocence of language and the muteness of power.

I believe that language is imbued with power, which is the same to say that science and pedagogy, which are languages, are imbued with power. That is, the beautiful ideal inspired by Habermas, which Michael Oakshott, for example, applies to the university, of making participative, dialogic, cooperative and conversational language its mission and its destiny, as well as the search for the universals of communication, deserves no enthusiasm, and mostly nor trust.

In our modernity, which is the age of generalised communication (the age of the mass media, and of social networks), universities have seen the preoccupations with productivity,



financial responsibility and strategic management defeat the values of autonomy and public service.

The university thus reflects the discomfort of our modernity. Furthermore, if we look closely at the way it works, we can even say that the university greatly contributes to this social uneasiness. At a greater scale than any other institution, the university has made its own the founding myth of our liberal society, a society where people and knowledge circulate freely, and where redemption through talent and merit is promised to a horde of people who are helplessly condemned to oblivion and anonymity. At the same time that it promises that redemption, the university exacerbates individualism and condemns multitudes to the most radical impotence.

There was a time, not that remote, when we could speak of the “eternal mission” and of the “permanent objectives” of the university. Back then, the idea of truth organised people’s lives as both the origin and the end of a meaningful story. In such a world, the main objective of the university was research, because the truth can only be reached by those who look for it systematically. But truth was much more than science, so the university had a second objective: to serve culture and to manage to educate a person in his or her entirety. And as truth can be transmitted, the university had to devote itself to teaching. Even the teaching of a profession was thought in terms of a complete education.

But the unconditional search for truth is no longer our thing. It is liberal reason that rules the world now. Liberal reason, that which Lyotard simply called “the system”. And the system, up until recently (up until the Wall Street crash in 2008), might not have allowed for peace, but it guaranteed safety; might not have promised progress, but it guaranteed growth. By what means? Doubtlessly by the market and by competition. The system did not have others. And it still does not have them, even if today it does not even manage to guarantee safety, let alone growth.

To the question “How is the scope of freedom and creative potential of researchers being affected in a context where markets seem to rule?”, I would answer by insisting on the nature of the information technologies. They connect individuals globally in real time and create in them the brains that they need, the brains of mobile individuals, ready to be mobilised, competitive and performative, that is, apt to work in the market, and also apt for the database and the ranking, and everything that the theodicy of the market calls “quality” and “excellence”.

And I conclude my point of view by invoking a document written by Licínio Pereira in 1997 and presented over a decade ago to the Senate of the University of Minho. In that document, he suggested an internationalisation of the university based on the following ideas: the digital revolution threatens to make the professor-actor obsolete; globalisation conditions competition in the academic world (the best universities attract the best students and the best professors, so the best projects are consolidated and strengthened, while the weak ones disappear); the paradigm of the society of knowledge quickly renders traditional education out of date, and it is now more important to acquire bases, methodologies and skills that can generate a culture of change and creativity, than to “learn without investing”. Under these circumstances, those who lead in information technology and “grab

the potential of multimedia products” have a good chance to succeed in the challenge of internationalisation.

From this perspective, the strategy of internationalisation of the university, in the terms that was formulated, meant three things:

1. Information does not need communication. In fact, that is what it is about when information does not have a real body, is not open to the time of the “other”, and has no ethical exigency.
2. It is by becoming slaves of time that we avoid exclusion. In fact, to deposit in the market and in competition all the hopes for security and growth is to succumb to the system, that is, to submit teaching and research to mere management strategies.
3. Pragmatism contradicts culture. In reality, what else is it about, when innovation, characterised by information technology and multimedia products, is set against tradition, understood as research, culture and teaching, that is, when, in a few words, it is set against the permanent objectives of the university?

***What drives research policies? The Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation cites Germany as a model and claims that the way it can help the Portuguese scientific community to be successful in European projects is by promoting a “greater alignment with European programmes”. To what extent are core countries setting standards, research areas and priorities, and how can that impact on the social sciences and the humanities, which are context-specific?***

There is, in fact, a serious problem with whom or what regulates research, namely the priority themes of research, the problems that are worth researching, and the research that justifies funding. That which is today absolutely clear to the scientific community, both national and international, is that whoever funds research also determines what is worth being researched, the theoretical and methodological paradigms that must be used, the language the research must be carried out in, the rules that have to be observed in the assessment of the research, and finally, from which geo-cultural region the researchers who do the assessment must hail from. Today, the scientific community has no illusions in this respect: those who vindicate research freedom concerning the subject, the question, the language or the theoretic and methodological paradigms of the research will not be funded. It is true that, these days, no country is interested in anything other than operative and instrumental science. For in the time of world economy there seems to be nothing beyond alliances, solidarity and cohesion achieved via the economy, the dynamics of the market, political commitments and technical and scientific cosmopolitanism. The quality that is demanded from science today is exhausted in the word “excellence”, which serves the designs of a utilitarian, product-oriented and mercantile reason, of a science devoid of the complexity of the human, because it is without memory, without responsibility and without conscience.

I believe that both the assessment of research centres and the assessment of projects in all scientific areas that the Portuguese state has been promoting for over twelve years, through FCT, are processes that enlighten us about the rationale behind the scientific and technologic policies that they support. By imposing, on Portuguese researchers, English as

the only language for research, and by handing in the scientific assessment exclusively to foreign researchers who predominantly come from an Anglo-Saxon geo-cultural area (which, at least in the social and in the human sciences, is contrary to the strategic options of cooperation on the part of the national community, which privileges the Lusophone and the Ibero-American contexts), by obsessively valuing the publication of articles in journals with an impact factor as the main criteria for assessing scientific merit, and by creating scientific councils without consulting the academic community, the Portuguese state, in my opinion, is withdrawing the country from the company of developed nations.

This international “help” in research (with language, with the questions to deal with, with the assessment teams, and with the theoretical models it follows), required by the Portuguese government (via FCT) is all too similar to that of a country dependent upon “external financial assistance”. Also in science the situation is that of financial “rescue”, with the European Commission, as the funding institution, establishing the way of doing science, and the Portuguese government, in a submissive attitude, following external interests instead of the interests of the Portuguese community.

A particularly harmful example of this scientific “rescue” for the interests of the Portuguese scientific community were the cooperation agreements established, in October 2006, between the Portuguese government and three American institutions: the MIT, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of Texas at Austin. Those protocols originated a series of programmes of scientific and technological cooperation, which includes international research and postgraduate programmes funded by the Portuguese government, in all likelihood with European money. The government moved a significant amount of capital from the doctoral and postdoctoral support funds of national universities to American universities, with no benefit for Portugal.

The government established this strategy of internationalisation of the sciences in Portugal against the strategies of international cooperation that were already in place in the research centres, and also against the very processes that FCT established to assess the quality and the merit of the research groups that exist in the country. Thinking in particular about the agreement made by the Portuguese government with the University of Texas at Austin, it strikes me as surprising that the Portuguese government would choose The New University of Lisbon and the University of Porto as partners for that American university for research projects and doctoral programmes in digital and multimedia communication, when these particular Portuguese universities do not have research centres that have been assessed as being “excellent” in that area.

This adherence of the organization model of science in Portugal to foreign models (let us bear in mind that the scientific areas have recently been redefined according to the model of the European Research Council, and that the researchers assessing the Portuguese scientific production are also members of this Council), according to FCT, aims at turning Portugal into a partner that will help reinforce Europe’s competitive capacity in the world scene. But it is significant that we find, in the report produced in late December 2011 by the Scientific Council of Social Sciences and Humanities of FCT, presided by José Mattoso, a letter that is directed to the Head of FCT and signed by 88 professors and researchers in

Economy, demanding “plurality and interdisciplinary openness in the research in Economy”. But the exposure of the “impoverishing narrowness of the studies in this area”, as well as the hostility towards diversity in favour of the submission of quality to the loyalty to a hegemonic canon, in the assessment of research projects by FCT, is not a reality specific to Economy. It is, after all, the law that is enforced on the whole of Social and the Human Sciences.

Braga, University of Minho, October 28, 2013

## Interview with Teun Van Dijk



BY ZARA PINTO-COELHO

Teun van Dijk was professor of discourse studies at the University of Amsterdam until 2004, and is at present professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. After earlier work on generative poetics, text grammar, and the psychology of text processing, his work since 1980 takes a more critical perspective and deals with discursive racism, news in the press, ideology, knowledge and context. He is the author of several books in most of these areas, and he edited *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (4 vols, 1985) the introductory book *Discourse Studies* (2 vols., 1997; new one-volume edition, 2011) as well as the reader *The Study of Discourse* (5 vols., 2007). He founded six international journals, *Poetics*, *Text* (now *Text & Talk*), *Discourse & Society*, *Discourse Studies*, *Discourse & Communication* and the internet journal in Spanish *Discurso & Sociedad* of which he still edits the latter four. His last monographs in English are *Ideology* (1998), *Racism and discourse in Spain and Latin America* (2005), *Discourse and Context* (2008), *Society and Discourse* (2009). His last edited books are *Racism at the Top* (2000, with Ruth Wodak), and *Racism and Discourse in Latin America* (2009). For more information, please go to <http://www.discourses.org>.

Zara Pinto-Coelho is Associate Professor at the Communication Sciences Department and research group leader at the *Communication and Society Research Centre* (CECS), University of Minho, Braga, Portugal.

***Zara Pinto-Coelho – How has the notion of crisis entered discourses about higher education and research?***

**Teun Van Dijk** – The word that comes to mind is “cuts”, in Spanish “recortes”. So crisis for us in the university, first of all, means cuts. It means that students – even those with a PhD – don’t get jobs. In Spain they didn’t get jobs anyway, but now it’s completely impossible. Today there are limitations on practically everything, resources for scholarships, for research projects and so on.

So the dominant theme of political and educational discourse today is *austerity*. Governments that need to cut expenditures will cut funding for research projects. And less research means being technologically less competitive which in turn means fewer jobs, and so on. So this crisis is spiraling down everything, and it may take a decade or more to recover – if at all.

***Do you think there is a connection between the crisis discourse and other kind of crisis discourses? I mean the crisis discourse is used in education, as well as in other fields?***

Such as?

***For example, people are talking about a financial crisis, cultural crisis, political crisis. Is there an interconnection between these discourses of crisis?***

I think the main discourse is about the financial-economic crisis. These topics take so much space in political and media discourse that there is hardly any time and energy to attend to other problems. If you think of Spain, where I have lived in the last thirteen years, several years ago the dominant topic was of course terrorism. But since ETA was nearly defeated, the other main topic of public concern and discourse was immigration, as elsewhere in Europe. Cultural differences such as Islam, the use of hijabs by some Muslim women, or the construction of mosques. Or healthcare – the alleged abuses of health services by immigrants. Now, during the economic crisis, this is worse, of course, because autochthonous people tend to blame the immigrants – thus following the dominant discourse of the symbolic elites in politics and the media.

So, no wonder that the economic crisis in Europe is exacerbating racism and xenophobia everywhere. We not only see racist parties getting lots of votes in many countries. But – even worse perhaps – mainstream parties advocating ideas that are hard to distinguish from those of the extreme right, as it is happening in the UK. In Greece, an openly fascist party is wielding power in parliament and on the street. As is the case in Hungary. In Denmark, Holland and Austria anti-immigrant parties have received lots of votes. Interestingly, such racism, xenophobia and islamophobia is so strong in relatively prosperous northern countries in Europe. This suggests on the one hand that these seem to be defending themselves primarily against the cultural Other from the South, as is the case with islamophobia. But on the other hand, we should always remember that racism is a system of power. So, the resistance against immigration, also in the North, should primarily be seen as a manifestation of domination, of white Europeans and their culture against Others and their cultures.

Obviously, this is not totally new. Racism is a European invention. It was invented in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, for instance to legitimate slavery, and then segregation and Apartheid. It was blatant until at least World War II – with eugenic policies in many countries. And after the war and the Holocaust it became less acceptable to be explicitly racist and anti-Semitic. But memories are short and although current extremist right-wing parties are still generally seen as less *salonfähig* as one says in German, their ideas are readily accepted in the mainstream media, as I just said.



Today, this debate on immigration is being submerged in a much more general debate on the economic crisis. Whereas immigration was and is in many respects about a pseudo-problem (after all, immigration generally brings mostly advantages – also economic ones – to a country) the current economic crisis is a real problem to worry about because it affects all and everyone except maybe the rich.

***So are immigration policies getting stricter?***

Everywhere, but that was already happening before the crisis. Don't forget that racism and xenophobia are not a question of "fear". Therefore words such as *xenophobia* and *islamo-phobia* are in fact misrepresenting the situation. People in Western Europe, and especially the elites, do not live in permanent fear of a few immigrants – who don't even enter their own neighborhoods except as service personnel. Again, racism is about power and power abuse. It is about who is in control. Economic, political and cultural control.

***I don't know, my impression is that now the situation is worse.***

No doubt, in terms of economic crisis, and with popular pressure for jobs and services, immigration policies and the general discourse become more anti-immigrant, and not only on the right. Also, the immigrants are a perfect excuse to blame the victim. In history, strangers, minorities and immigrants have always been used and abused as scapegoats for internal crises, as we have seen most dramatically with the Holocaust following the economic crisis of 1929. But don't forget that anti-immigration policies and discourses have been widespread in Europe since the 1970s even in times of economic prosperity. So, explaining racism and xenophobia only in terms of economic crisis is a bad theory.

***How is the role of the state in research and education being revised and with what implications? How is the scope of freedom and creative potential of researchers being affected in a context where markets seem to rule? There's less money available...***

Yes, obviously, and as I said before, when governments have less to spend they will cut costs where they can, and since education is where a lot of money is going, education will suffer. Research is especially vulnerable because research projects and scholarships are easier to cut than positions of teachers and professors, especially those who are civil servants. So, those who will suffer most are the younger teachers who don't get jobs in the first place, or the younger researchers who don't get scholarships, so need to find a job that is very hard to find in times of economic crisis. And even those few who are able to finish a PhD against all odds won't get the few highly qualified jobs in universities, laboratories and other organizations. So, thousands of them in Spain are now leaving the country. I recommend to my PhDs to go and find jobs in Brazil, Australia or South-East Asia. In our area of discourse studies the pressure of the economic crisis and the markets does not yet affect the very aims and contents of research projects as may be the case in other fields. We can still do critical discourse analysis, and others can still analyze poetry. But it is obviously true that if you want a job in the future it is better to have an MBA or a PhD in molecular biology. An additional problem in Spain is that, compared to other countries, companies hardly invest in

research. No doubt this is one of the major reasons of its economic and academic weakness. So, it is no longer very relevant to be “excellent” or not.

### ***Evaluated as Excellent?***

As you know the fashionable word in international university-speak is “Excellence”. Look at any university website and you’ll see that they sell themselves as being “excellent”. Also in Spain, despite the fact that there are barely any Spanish universities among the 500 best universities in the world, as measured by the well-known Shanghai criteria. Universities are becoming more and more like business corporations competing for funds and for paying students. So they must compete with the “excellence” of their programmes and professors to attract students, especially those from abroad who are able to pay high fees. Where before professors (and, since 1968, some students) were running our universities, today administrators run them.

I have no problem with hiring and evaluation criteria getting tougher. In Spain, to become a professor today, you need to be evaluated by a national organization, ANECA, which will require that you have international publications in “impact journals”. There were, and still are, many university appointments of scholars who are local students or local professors, instead of really open forms of competition for jobs as the system of “oppositions” in Spain requires. It is also true that in Spain access to the international literature and publication is seriously limited by the low level of proficiency in English, as compared for instance with Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries.

So we see a complex combination of reasons and causes that make Spain less competitive internationally – and hence more prone to suffering from the economic crisis – besides the known causes, such as its exaggerated reliance on construction and construction jobs during the last decades of strong economic growth. And the economic crisis in turn exacerbates the financial situation of universities and research, which in turn prevents the crisis being resolved by for instance technological renewal, as was happening in Finland, and today in China and many other countries in what was called the Third World.

***Who drives research policies? The Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation cites Germany as a model and claims that the way it can help the Portuguese scientific community be successful in European calls is by promoting a “greater alignment with the European programmes”. To what extent are core countries setting standards, research areas and priorities, and how can that impact on social sciences and humanities, which are context-specific?***

I haven’t followed that particular kind of debate and I don’t see it being dealt with in the press or in university department. Yes, it does make a difference if a scholar is able to get “European” money and international projects, especially in the new technological areas. But in our area of linguistics, discourse analysis, communication and the social sciences, I don’t see much of such pressure for alignment with Europe, which by the way I see as a positive thing. Research is inherently international and international cooperation is crucial. As founding editor of several international journals in my field, I can say that the criteria are

explicitly international. I have contributed to international cooperation by co-founding the Latin American Association of Discourse Studies (ALED) in 1995, took the initiative to found a similar organization in Spain and Portugal, and am now trying to stimulate my colleagues in South East Asia, who very much interested in discourse studies, to do the same. From my experience with ALED such organizations are tremendously successful in stimulating international cooperation. My colleagues in Latin America traditionally looked up and imitated French and sometimes English, German and North American scholars. Today, because of biannual meetings they see, hear, read and cite also each other. Europe has a strong tradition of international cooperation – where in the USA many scholars only read and cooperate nationally – and in many fields of research it is no longer possible to advance without such cooperation, especially in fields where expensive labs and machinery are necessary. But although Germany is economically dominant in Europe, it does not mean it is academically so – at least not in our area, where Anglo-Saxon research is no doubt dominating.

***Maybe it is just an European policy.***

By European policy you mean out of Brussels? Or because that take up what German scientists do?

***Germany is now leading in Europe...***

Financially speaking?

***Not only. Also in research, at least in our country. The Portuguese Science Foundation in their official documents uses Germany as a model to be followed.***

How? I haven't seen it for Spain, but I can see later, after this conversation. I'm curious to see how they formulate the arguments that they are the best...

***They use German research policy as an example of excellence.***

And why not, for example, England?

***I don't know. I think it has to do with other reasons, political, economic...***

As I said, in our field, in the journals I edit, German scholars are not very prominent. They are more active nationally than internationally, as is the case in France, also because many of them are hardly fluent in English, which is surprising when you think of the international economic role of the country.

But such influences may fluctuate. Think of the 1960s and 1970s when structuralism in linguistics, literature, semiotics and the social sciences became widespread. This was the time of Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Greimas, Todorov and many others, such as Foucault, becoming internationally famous and inspiring. Today, virtually nothing of this remains, and the only ones in our field heard of outside of France are Maingueneau and Charaudeau, but their influence is limited to South America where the French School is still very influential. Today, in our field, I would say that most work being published in the scholarly journals is truly international, with papers from the USA, the UK and the EU still being prominent, but

with increasing numbers of papers from China and many other countries. There are very prominent absences besides Germany, as is the case of huge countries such as India and Russia. So, it is difficult to say which research programmes or systems of evaluation should be imitated in Portugal and Spain. It is best to be very flexible and to ask scholars rather than administrators or politicians. I'm not sure if Germany is such a good example... But, yes, they have more money for research than Spain and Portugal.

***Probably that's the point...***

I'm not sure whether their criteria are so much better than those of everybody else.

***Our research Foundation doesn't explain. It just uses it as "the example".***

But we can explore why Germany is such a good example. Why not China? Why not India? Why not Norway? Why not the United States?

***Why not?***

It's still the case that internationally, by far, the United States is on top of the frequency of publications, of everything, because of the language. They attract most influential scholars in practically all domains, maybe not in discourse analysis, but practically all domains. They may have come from Hungary, Germany, Austria, Japan or Asia. They go there, because of the attraction of the universities, and the salary, or because in their countries there's no money, or they were expelled for political reasons as we know from the exodus of thousands of brilliant Jewish scholars in the 1930s.

***The next question has to do with excellence. In Portugal there is a widespread institutional pressure towards excellence, translated into the internationalization of research, strong competition and publication in journals with known impact factor. In Portugal, for the social sciences and humanities fields, this means following core countries – Anglo-Saxon ones – and core languages – basically English – and applying for European funding. Is that the case in your country? What are the implications of these priorities for the work of researchers and for the diversity and quality of research?***

As already indicated above, this is very strong everywhere: in Spain, Holland and in Latin America. Some of this is positive, such as the necessity of international cooperation, and the criterion that your paper or book is inspired by international research. We may regret it, but the fact is that the current international *lingua franca* is English, and with respect for the diversity of languages and data, we'd better be fluent in English in our academic communication. But there are also many disadvantages, such as the exclusive focus on journal articles. Sometimes because of the influence of the hard sciences a paper in a so-called impact journal, which could be written up in weeks, counts more than a monograph that one has worked on for years.

***What examples of resistance to the crisis discourse can you point out? How can alternative forms of governance in education and research be imagined and enacted?***

Compared to what happens in the cities, in the university there is very little resistance. If I think of resistance, I think of the movement in Spain of fifteenth of May, the M-15. Also in Lisboa I saw people camp in the central square, as they did in Plaça de Catalunya in Barcelona, or in a square in New York. We have had some recent university strikes and even high school students have gone to the street. But within the universities, compared to say 1968, the resistance is minimal. Besides direct political action, we also need much more critical analysis in the social sciences and discourse analysis. But again it is remarkable that after four years of economic crisis very few articles have been written about it from a discourse analytical point of view. In that respect, CDA is not very influential, I am afraid to admit.

***There is a meeting in Lancaster about the crisis discourse next week with Ruth Wodak, Jason Glynos and Andrew Sayer. They are working on that topic, so maybe in one year or so...***

I don't see it coming just yet. I got for the first time an article about the discourse of the Arab liberalization and "Spring" in Tahrir. So the first papers are coming and they get to journals in a few months, so that's no problem. But I still haven't gotten any crisis discourse paper. Look, it's a lot of work, but we already have the economic crisis here for four years, so where are all these papers? By now we could have all kinds of papers about this topic in the three journals [*Discourse & Society*, *Discourse & Communication*, *Discourse Studies*], but I don't see it happen. Maybe in the economics, but not in the linguistic discourse analysis.

Braga, University of Minho, July 6, 2012